18
SUZUKA
KOUJI SEO

KOJI SEO
瀬尾公治

涼風 SUZUKA

18

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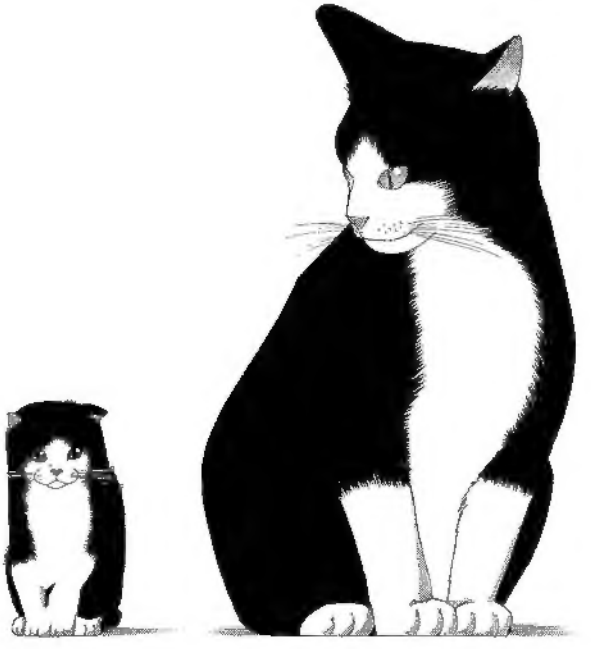


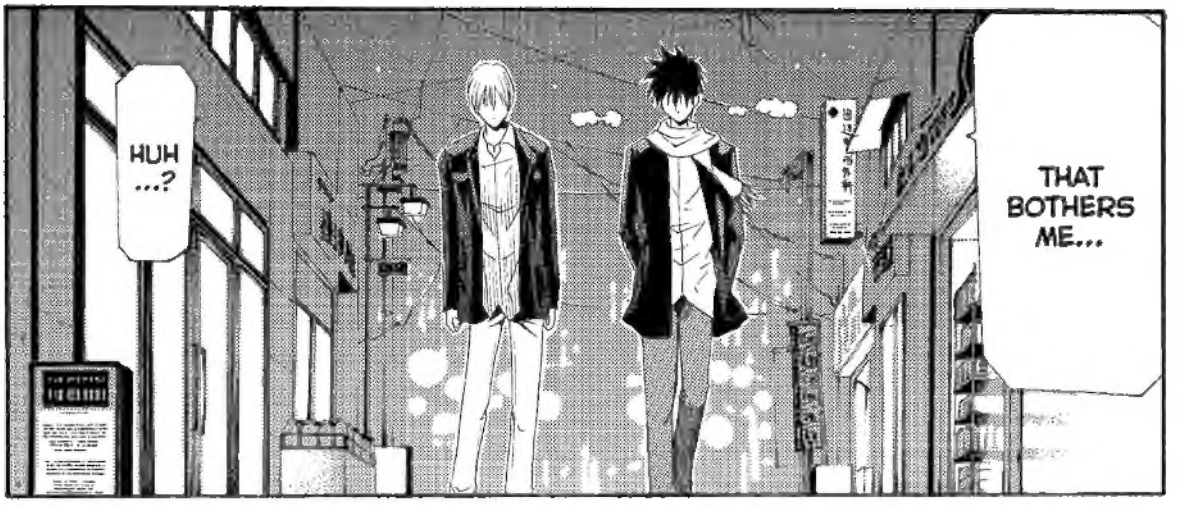
涼風 SUZUKA

#157 EXPECTATIONS

WELL ...
AFTER SEMPAI REALLY CHEWED ME OUT, I'M OBVIOUSLY BUMMED.
...
YOU SEEMED TO BE OUT OF IT EVEN AT THE TIME.
W... WELL, THAT'S ...

THEY EXPECT A LOT OUT OF YOU, MAN...
WHAT'S ON YOUR MIND?

...



★ THIS STORY IS FICTIONAL, AND COMPLETELY UNRELATED TO REAL PEOPLE, "GROUPS," OR EVENTS.

YOU'RE NOT GIVING UP BECAUSE OF THAT...
...ARE YOU?
...
YOU'RE STILL GONNA CONTINUE WITH TRACK, RIGHT?
I DON'T KNOW ...
HUH ...?

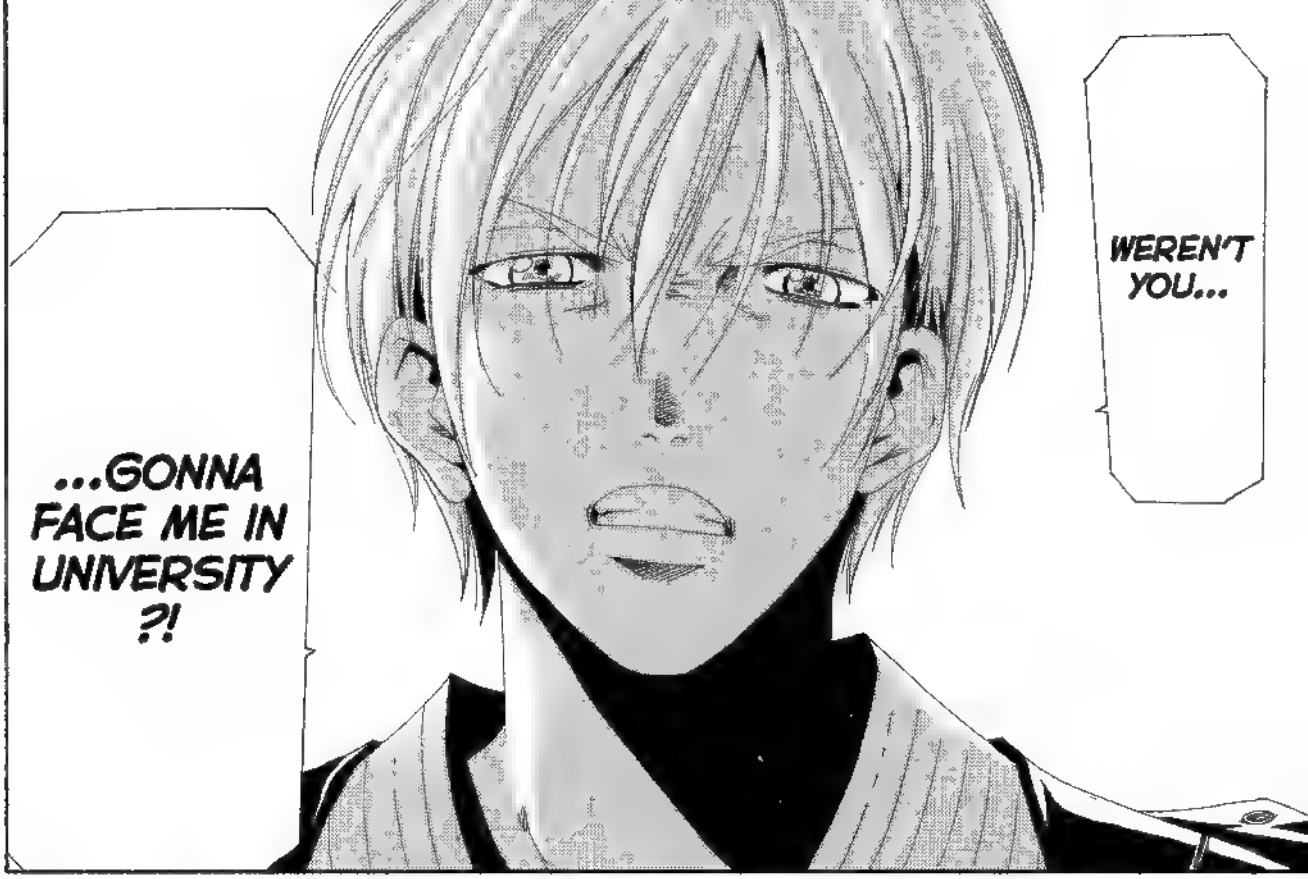
ANYWAY ...
...I'M NOT EVEN THINKING ABOUT THAT RIGHT NOW.
GRAB
AN-SWER ME...
WHAT THE HELL, MAN?
WHAT ELSE IS GOING ON WITH YOU BESIDES TRACK?
SHAKE
IT HAS NOTHING TO DO WITH YOU!!
YOU JUST WON'T DROP IT, WILL YOU?!
O...OW! WHAT GIVES?!
I...
...

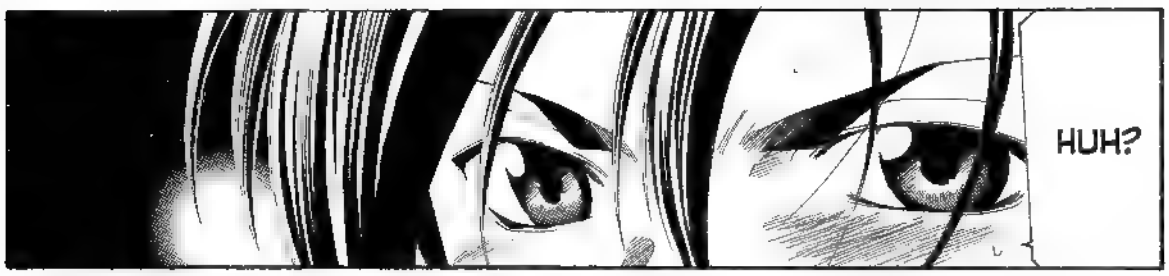
KA
POW
THUD

OW!!
WHAT THE HELL ?!

DON'T BE AN IDIOT!

PANT
PANT


WEREN'T YOU...
...GONNA FACE ME IN UNIVERSITY ?!


HUH?

THAT'S WHAT YOU SAID, DIDN'T YOU...?
THAT YOU WEREN'T FOOLING AROUND ALL YEAR...
...THAT YOU WERE GONNA BEAT ME, NO MATTER WHAT SCHOOL YOU GO TO.

ARIMA...
...
...ALL JUST A LIE?
WAS THAT...
LIKE "WHAT DID AKITSUKI PLACE IN THE I.H?" AND "WHAT'S HIS CURRENT TIME?"...
WHEN WE WERE ABROAD, HE JUST KEPT ASKING ABOUT YOU...
SCRAPE
BUT...
IT'S NOT A LIE...
TO BE HONEST...
...HE REALLY SEES YOU AS HIS RIVAL, Y'KNOW!

WHY THE HECK DID I END UP TELLING HIM...?

SO ...?

UH... SO SHE SAID SHE CAN'T HAVE THE BABY...
...BUT I DON'T THINK WE SHOULD ABORT IT, EITHER...

SHE'S PREG-NANT ...?
UH, YEAH ...

THAT'S WHY ...
...I DON'T KNOW WHAT TO DO...
BUT, NEITHER OF YOU WILL BE ABLE TO GO TO UNIVERSITY IF YOU HAVE THE BABY...
AND YOU'LL BURDEN A LOT OF OTHER PEOPLE, TOO...
CLATTER
I MEAN, WHAT IF SOMETHING HAPPENS TO ASAHINA...?
N... NO ONE ASKED FOR YOUR OPINION!!
IF IT WERE ME...
...I WOULDN'T THINK TWICE ABOUT ABORTING.
HUH ?!
WHO CARES ABOUT THAT?

THE MOST IMPORTANT THING TO ME...
...!!
ISN'T THAT THE CASE WITH YOU?
I...
...IS TRACK.

WHO GIVES A DAMN...
...ABOUT ASAHINA RIGHT NOW?
HUH ?!
I GIVE A DAMN...
CLENCH
RA
THAT'S WHO!!
WHA ...?!
POW

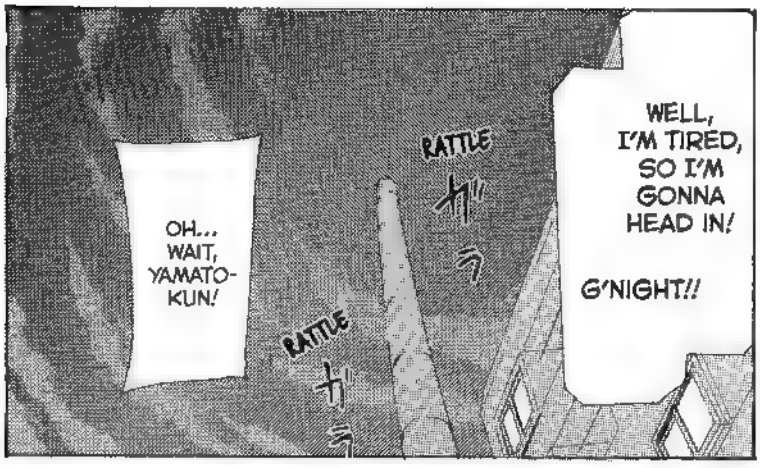
WHAT THE HELL, MAN ?!
THWACK
...IS OBVIOUS!!
THE MOST IMPORTANT THING TO ME...
WHAM
...
YOU'VE ALWAYS PISSED ME THE HELL OFF...
OOF !!
GETTING ALL COCKY WHEN YOU SHOULD'VE JUST LISTENED...!

H... HEY ...
NO KICKS, MAN! NO KICKS !!
SHUT UP!!
...!!
SMACK
POW
...!!

BOOM
EEEK!!
WHAT ON EARTH HAPPENED TO YOU, YAMATO?! YOUR FACE!!
MEOW
I'M HOME...
N... NEVER MIND THAT!!
DID SUZUKA-CHAN'S DAD HIT YOU?!
WAHHH! THAT'S AWFUL!!
I KNOW YOU KEPT YOUR TRIP A SECRET, BUT STILL!!
UH, NO!! IT WASN'T SUZUKA'S DAD!!
FLUSTERED
FLUSTERED
NO

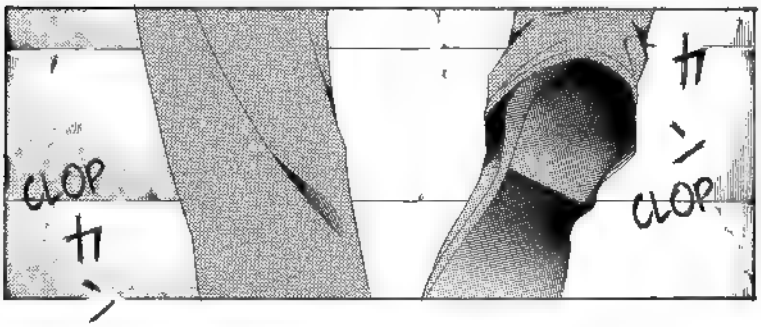
K... KINUGASA-SEMPAI SCOLDED ME ABOUT MY LACK OF SPIRIT.
HE SAID I'VE BEEN SLACKING OFF LATELY.
LACK OF SPIRIT? EVEN SO, THIS IS CROSS-ING THE LINE.

HUH? HE DIDN'T ?


WELL, I'M TIRED, SO I'M GONNA HEAD IN!
G'NIGHT!!
RATTLE
RATTLE
OH... WAIT, YAMATO-KUN!

A-ANYWAY, THINGS ARE FINE WITH ASAHINA!!
HER DAD FORGAVE ME!!
O...OH? THAT'S GOOD TO HEAR...

DO YOU THINK HE'S REALLY OKAY?
I DON'T KNOW ...


CLOP
CLOP

THE MOST IMPORTANT THING TO ME IS TRUTH
ISN'T THAT THE CASE WITH YOU?
HMPH.
...
ASAHINA
...
IS WHAT IS MOST IMPORTANT TO ME

SUZUKA
涼風
#158 THE PRAYER

THAT WAS DELICIOUS. THANKS!

...
ソワ
FIDGET
ソワ
FIDGET

IT JUST ISN'T THE HOLIDAYS WITHOUT HAVING SOBA NOODLES HERE ON NEW YEAR'S EVE.
SIZZLE
SAO-TOME-SAN, YOU'RE LOOKING PALE AGAIN.
IT WAS DELI-CIOUS, AYANO-SAN.
OH, REALLY? THANK YOU!

HUH? UH...
SSSSIP
WELL, NOT THAT THAT'S ANY-THING NEW.
WHAT'S THE MATTER? YOU SEEM SO REST-LESS.

HE PROMISED SUZUKA THAT HE'D GO WITH HER TO THEIR FIRST SHRINE OF THE YEAR.
OH. SO ...
...YOU'RE ITCHING TO SEE YOUR BELOVED SUZUKA-CHAN.
N... NO!! I'M NOT...
IF YOU WEREN'T SUCH AN IDIOT, SHE WOULD'VE BEEN ABLE TO STAY HERE. POOR GIRL.
...!!
...!!
SHUT UP, YOU DRUNK!!
WELL... YOU'RE GOING TO THE SAME SCHOOL AND YOU'RE ON THE SAME SPORTS TEAM, SO...
UH, YEAH ...
YOU'RE RIGHT ...
...YOU JUST HAVE TO HOLD ON A LITTLE LONGER!
SPEAK OF THE DEVIL...
ピンポーン
DING-DONG

GOOD EVE-NING!
HUG!!!
EEK!
SUZUKA-CHAAAN! LONG TIME NO SEE!!
SHAKE
SHAKE
W... WELL, I WAS ALSO TO BLAME, SO...
IT MUST'VE SUCKED TO GET GROUNDED 'CAUSE OF YAMATO-KUN.
HUH ?
HEY!! DON'T BE SO ROUGH WITH HER!!

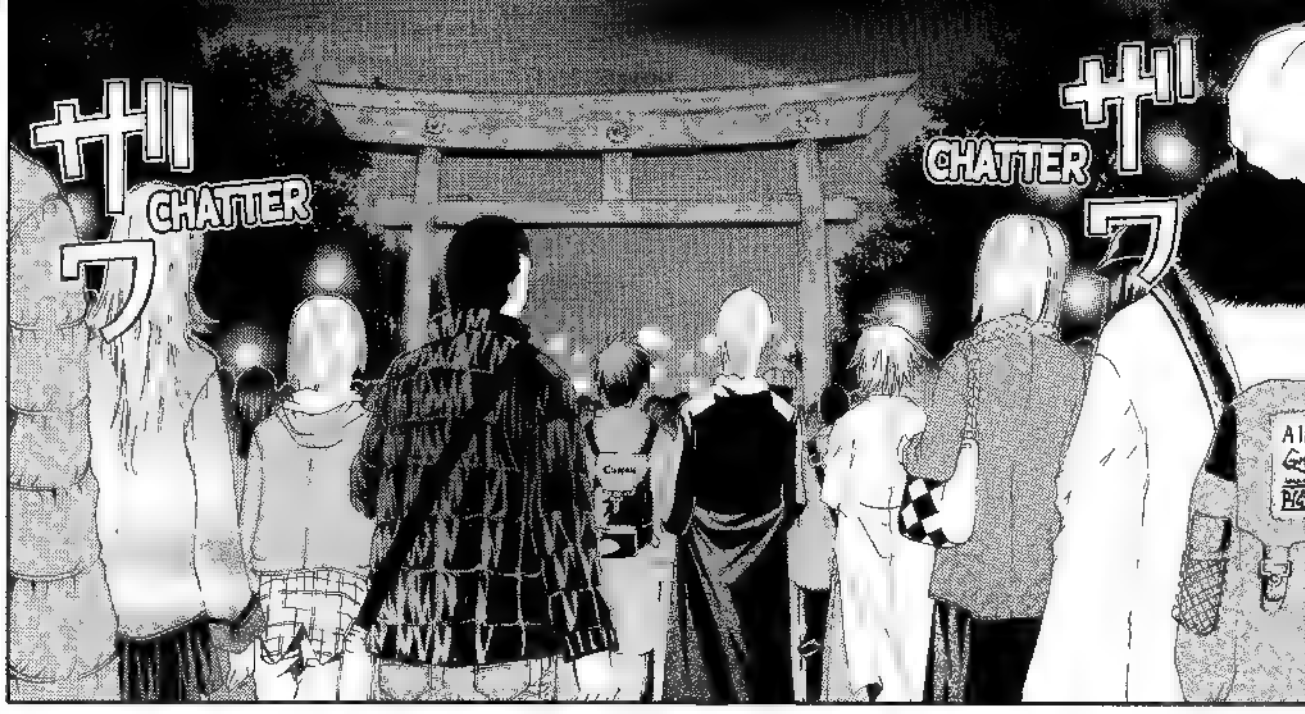
WHAT? I'M EVEN MAKING YOU JEALOUS?
HOW CRAZY ARE YOU ABOUT SUZUKA-CHAN?

...!
SO WHAT IS IT, THEN?
THAT'S NOT IT!!

HUH?!
WHA?!
I'LL TELL YOU ABOUT IT ON THE WAY!!
SEE YOU AROUND, YUKA-SAN! HAPPY NEW YEAR!!
UH... HEY!

HUH? UH...
HEY, WHAT HAP-PENED TO YOUR FACE, YAMATO-KUN?
YOU GOT REALLY BEAT UP!!

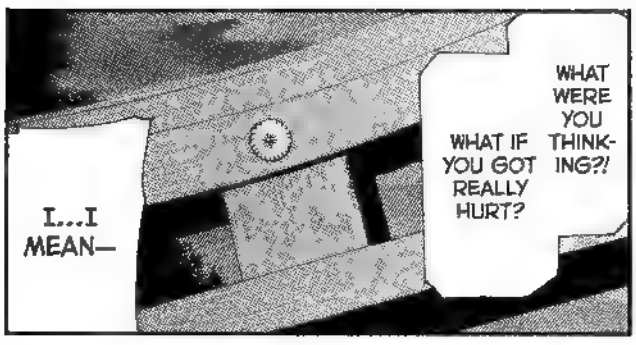
SAOTOME-SAN, WE GOTTA CATCH THE BUS SOON.
SOME-THING'S UP...


CHATTER
CHATTER

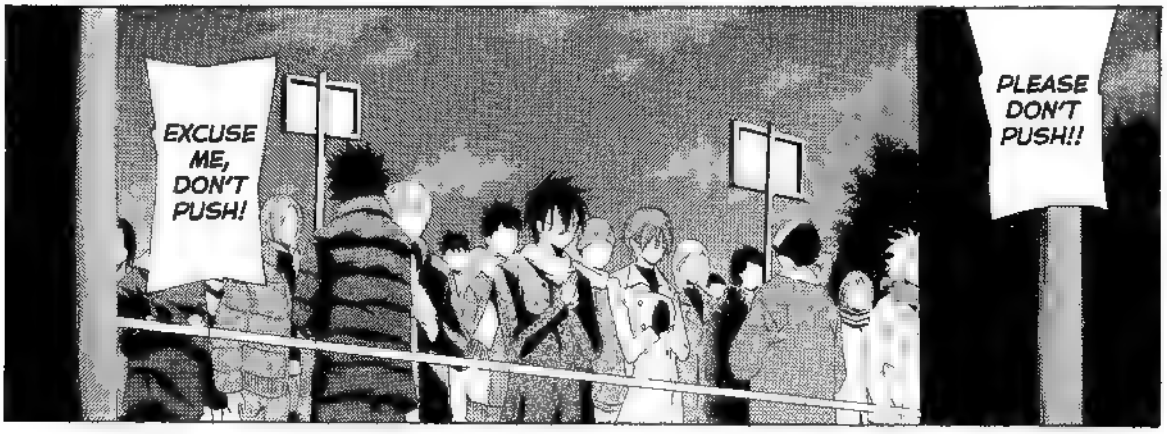
YOU GOT IN A FIGHT?
HUH?

HM? UH, IT WAS JUST AN ARGU-MENT ...
WHY? WHAT DID HE SAY TO YOU...?

YEAH ...
KINUGASA-SEMPAI AND I WERE HAVING DINNER, WHEN MIYAMOTO-SENPAI AND ARIMA JOINED US...AND THEN, ON THE WAY HOME, I SORTA GOT INTO IT WITH ARIMA...


I...I MEAN—
WHAT IF YOU GOT REALLY HURT?
WHAT WERE YOU THINK-ING?!

UH... OF COURSE NOT, MA'AM ...
THAT'S NOT SOMETHING TO BE PROUD OF.
...I GOT TWO OR THREE GOOD PUNCHES IN, TOO, Y'KNOW!
YEAH, HE ROUGHED ME UP, BUT...
...
THIS TIME, IT WAS DIFFERENT...
YOU TWO REALLY CAN'T GET ALONG, HUH...
NOTHING COULD'VE BEEN WORTH GETTING INTO A FIGHT LIKE THAT...
HUH?
UH... NOTHING... C'MON! LET'S HURRY TO THE SHRINE!
UH... OKAY ...


EXCUSE ME, DON'T PUSH!
PLEASE DON'T PUSH!!

GLANCE

YOU SURE PRAYED FOR A LONG TIME...
HUH ...?
FRANKFURTERS
SPECIAL
W... WELL... IT WAS IMPORT-ANT, SO ...
OH YEAH ?
...
UH ...
CLOP
CLOP
YOU'RE NOT GONNA ASK?
WHAT ?

WHAT IT WAS THAT I PRAYED FOR...?
...
YEAH ...
I WON'T ASK.

OH...
...

YEAH ...
OH ...
UH... ANYWAY, SHOULD WE GO SOME-WHERE TO EAT?!
I'M STARV-ING, ASA-HINA!!
NO, I'M GOOD. I ATE EARLIER.
HEY ...
YEAHHH!
BANANA
YEAHHH!

I SHOULD ...
...ABORT IT, RIGHT?

HUH ...?
THAT'S ...
...WHAT ARIMA SAID, TOO.

YOU TOLD HIM?!
Y...

HUH ...?

OF COURSE, HE DIDN'T SAY IT LIKE THAT, BUT...
...I FIGURED THAT'S WHAT HE MEANT.
SPECIAL
FRENCH FRI

HE SAID ...
...HE WAS REALLY LOOKING FOR-WARD...
...TO GOING UP AGAINST ME IN UNI-VERSITY.

HE SEEMED REALLY EARNEST.
SO... I TOLD HIM THE TRUTH.
THAT YOU WERE PREG-NANT ...
...AND THAT I WASN'T SURE ABOUT UNIVERSITY UNTIL WE FIGURED OUT WHAT TO DO.
...
THEN HE SAID HE WOULDN'T HESITATE TO ABORT, IF IT WERE HIM...
...THAT THE MOST IMPORT-ANT THING TO HIM IS TRACK...
...AND THAT IT WOULDN'T MATTER WHAT HAPPENED TO YOU.

SO...
...I PUNCHED HIM!!

HUH?

...
YA-MATO-KUN ...

IT PISSES ME OFF THAT HE'D SAY SOME-THING LIKE THAT!!
I WASN'T GONNA LET HIM GET AWAY WITH IT!!

HEY ...
HM ...?
TRACK MIGHT BE THE MOST IMPORTANT THING TO HIM, BUT...
...TO ME...
I'D LIKE TO KNOW WHAT YOU PRAYED FOR, AFTER ALL...
HUH ...?
...
WELL ...
IS THAT OKAY ...?
UH, YEAH ...
IT'S FINE ...

I PRAYED THAT...
IYAKI

HIROSHIMA-STYLE
OKONOM
...YOU'D GIVE BIRTH TO A HEALTHY CHILD.

HUH ...?
WHAT? ARE YOU SERIOUS ?!
WHY WOULD YOU- ?!
AND THAT I'D GIVE ANYTHING ...
...FOR THAT TO HAPPEN.

I PRAYED THAT...
...YOU'D GIVE BIRTH TO A HEALTHY CHILD.
HUH...?
WHAT? ARE YOU SERIOUS ?!
WHY WOULD YOU-?!
AND THAT I'D GIVE ANYTHING ...
...FOR THAT TO HAPPEN.

#159 THE SURPRISE
SUZUKA
涼風

I DON'T REGRET IT...!
TMP
TMP
...I GAVE IT A LOT OF THOUGHT BEFORE DECIDING!!
I MEAN...
TMP

HUH ...?
WHY WOULD YOU SAY THAT...?
...THINKING ABOUT ME, YAMATO-KUN?
HAVE YOU REALLY BEEN...
...
I HAVE ...

I'VE THOUGHT ABOUT YOUR FUTURE...
...HOW SERIOUSLY YOU'VE BEEN TAKING TRACK...
...AND HOW YOU WOULDN'T BE ABLE TO DO IT IF YOU HAD THE BABY...
...AND HOW HARD IT MIGHT BE.

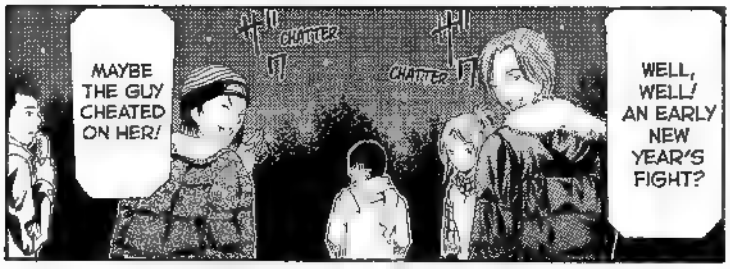
THEN ...

AFTER I HEARD YOU WERE PREG-NANT.
...I HAVEN'T STOPPED THINKING ABOUT IT, EVER.

BUT IN THE END, I STILL DON'T KNOW!
HUH ...?

I DON'T KNOW WHETHER THAT'S REALLY A GOOD REASON TO ABORT...
...AND IF IT'S NOT, THEN WHAT WE SHOULD DO.
NO MATTER HOW MUCH I THINK ABOUT IT...
...
I STILL HAVE NO IDEA.
THEN HOW DID YOU COME TO THE DECISION THAT YOU WANT THE BABY?
I KNOW THIS IS INCONSID-ERATE OF ME, BUT...
...I DISRE-GARDED ALL OF THAT AND SIMPLY THOUGHT ABOUT WHAT I WANTED...

THEN ...
...I REALIZED THAT ALL I WANTED...
...WAS FOR YOU TO HAVE THE BABY.


MAYBE THE GUY CHEATED ON HER!
CHATTER
CHATTER
WELL, WELL! AN EARLY NEW YEAR'S FIGHT?

THEN... YOU JUST DECIDED THAT OUT OF SELFISH-NESS!!
YEAH, I KNOW. I'M BEING SELFISH!!

BUT FOR THAT TO HAPPEN...
...I PRAYED THAT I'D DO ANYTHING.

...

WHAT'S "ANY-THING"?
WHAT ARE YOU SAYING YOU'D DO?
S... SO...
I KNOW SENPAI AND THE SCHOOL AREN'T GONNA LIKE IT, BUT...
...I PLAN TO QUIT UNIVER-SITY AND GET A JOB.
EVEN IF IT'S TOUGH AT THE BEGINNING, I'M THINKING I'LL RENT A HOUSE IN THE SUBURBS AND COMMUTE TO WORK FROM THERE.

YES, I CAN!!
YOU CAN'T DO THAT!!
...EVEN IF I CAN'T, I WILL!!
ANYWAY ...
HUH?
...WHEN I HEARD THAT YOU WERE PREGNANT...
I MEAN ...

...I FELT HAPPY.

CHATTER
WHOOSH
HUH
WHAT THE HECK?
YOU KEEP PUTTING YOURSELF FIRST...

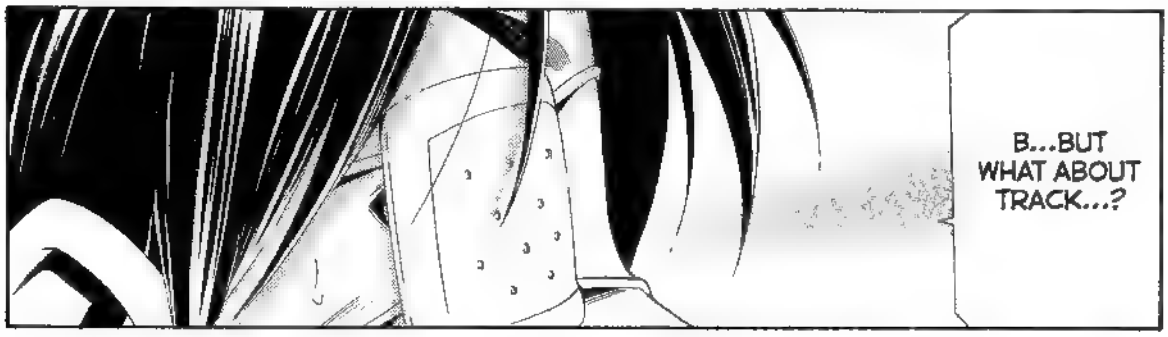
OKAY, THEN ...

LET'S HAVE THE BABY.

H... HEY!
WHAT'S WRONG ?!
STUMBLE
?!
HUHHH?!

IT'S NOTHING...
I WAS JUST SURPRISED TO HEAR YOU AGREE SO QUICKLY.
YOU KNOW... YOU'RE THE ONE WHO SAID YOU WANTED THE BABY.
WELL, YEAH, BUT...
...I THOUGHT YOU'D OBJECT MORE.
I THOUGHT ABOUT IT, TOO.
HUH?
I PUT ASIDE ALL THOUGHTS ABOUT YOUR FUTURE, OR ALL THE EXPECTATIONS PLACED ON YOU...
...OR HOW HARD IT'S GONNA BE ON YOU DOWN THE ROAD, YAMATO-KUN...
...AND I JUST THOUGHT ABOUT WHAT I WANTED...

AND I REALIZED THAT...
...I JUST WANT TO HAVE THE BABY, TOO.


B...BUT WHAT ABOUT TRACK...?

ASA-HINA ...
I ONLY THOUGHT ABOUT WHAT I WANTED.
I TOLD YOU, DIDN'T I?

ARE YOU GONNA SIT THERE FOREVER? C'MON, GET UP!
UH... OKAY.
MY BAD...
HOW WILL YOU HANDLE OUR FUTURE LIKE THIS?
GET IT TOGETH-ER, WILL YA?
NOW THAT WE'VE DECIDED TO HAVE THE BABY...
...THE HARD PART IS YET TO COME!
...

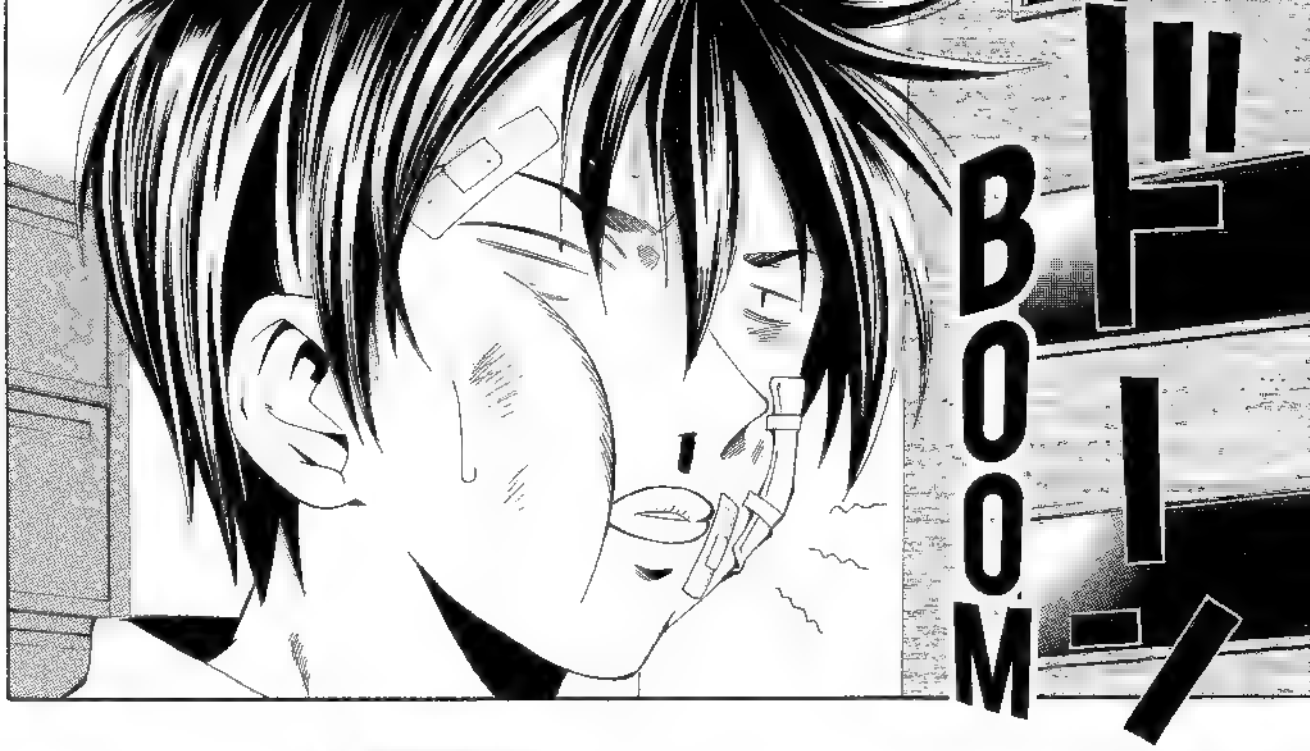
DASH
HUH? WHERE ARE WE GOING ...?
ALL RIGHT, THEN! LET'S GO!!
...WE SHOULD PRAY TOGETHER FOR A SAFE BIRTH, RIGHT?
FOR NOW ...
SOUNDS GOOD.
YEAH ...

SUZUKA
GACHUNK
GACHUNK
GACHUNK
GACHUNK
FOR NOW, I'LL TELL MY PARENTS AND AYANO-SAN...
UNTIL THEN, YOU WAIT AT HOME.
NO, THAT'S NOT RIGHT.
WE DECIDED WE WERE GONNA DO THIS TOGETHER.
NO...
FWAAH!
I HAVE TO GO, TOO!

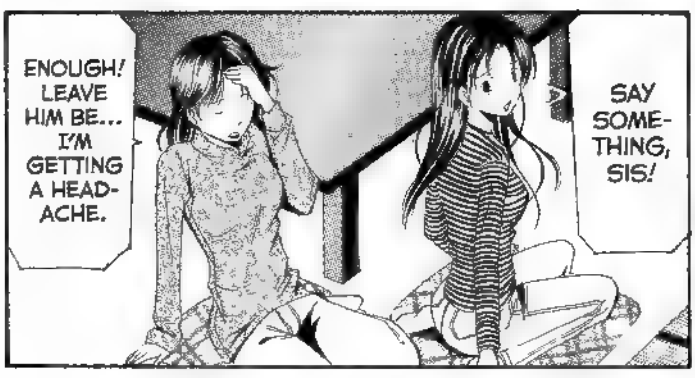
SUZUKA 涼風

#160 THE PARENTS

MIHO-CHAN!
HAPPY NEW YEAR!
TMP
TMP
MEOW
WHAT ARE YOU DOING HERE?
IS YAMATO-KUN AROUND?
OH! SUZU-KA...
UH... HAPPY NEW YEAR TO YOU, TOO!!
THEY'RE REALLY ANGRY AT HIM...
...SO I THINK YOU'RE BETTER OFF NOT GOING IN.
YEAH, HE IS, BUT...
...HIS MOM AND DAD ARE HERE, SO...
HUH?
OH...


BOOM

O...ONII-SAN, DON'T BE SO ROUGH!
BAM
YOU BE QUIET, AYANO-SAN!
BAM


SAY SOME-THING, SIS!
ENOUGH! LEAVE HIM BE... I'M GETTING A HEAD-ACHE.

MOM ...
RATTLE ガラ
MIHO... SORRY, BUT CAN YOU PLEASE STAY OUTSIDE FOR A BIT?

YOU IDIOT!
WHEEZE
YOU'RE SO PA-THETIC!!

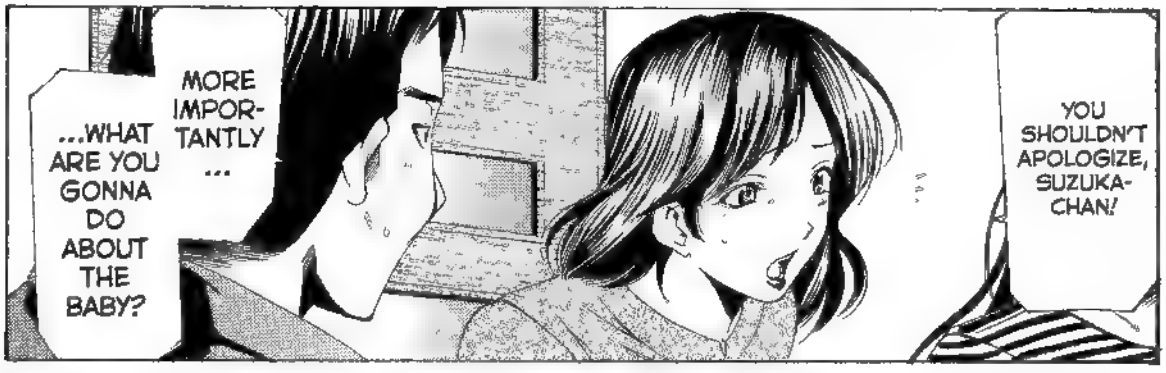
...SUZUKA WANTS TO TALK TO YOU...
BUT...
WHAT ARE YOU GONNA DO, DEAR?!
WHAT?!
HUH? ASA-HINA'S HERE?
CREAK
UH... IT'S BEEN A LONG TIME...
HAPPY NEW YEAR.

P...PLEASE FORGIVE OUR STUPID SON FOR CAUSING YOU SO MUCH TROUBLE...
THUD
YOU APOLO-GIZE, TOO, YAMATO!!
HUH ?!
UH... PLEASE STOP THAT!
THERE'S NOTHING YOU NEED TO APOLOGIZE TO ME FOR...
A... ANYWAY, WHY DON'T YOU HAVE A SEAT?
UH... MIHO, PLEASE STEP OUT.
OKAY ...
OKAY ...
...

SSSIP
...
JEEZ! AND HERE I WAS, THINKING THIS WAS JUST A NEW YEAR'S PHONE CALL!
YOU JUST HAD TO INSIST ON GOING TO TOKYO!
AND JUST WHEN I WAS WONDERING HOW YOU'VE BEEN, YOU KNOCK UP SOMEONE'S DAUGHTER, OF ALL THINGS...
WHAT THE HECK WERE YOU THINK-ING?!
POW
OUCH!!
UH ...
HE'S HURT, SO PLEASE DON'T ...
DEAR!
UH... I MEAN ...
...
UM ...

I'M TRULY SORRY ...
...FOR CAUSING YOU SO MUCH TROUBLE.

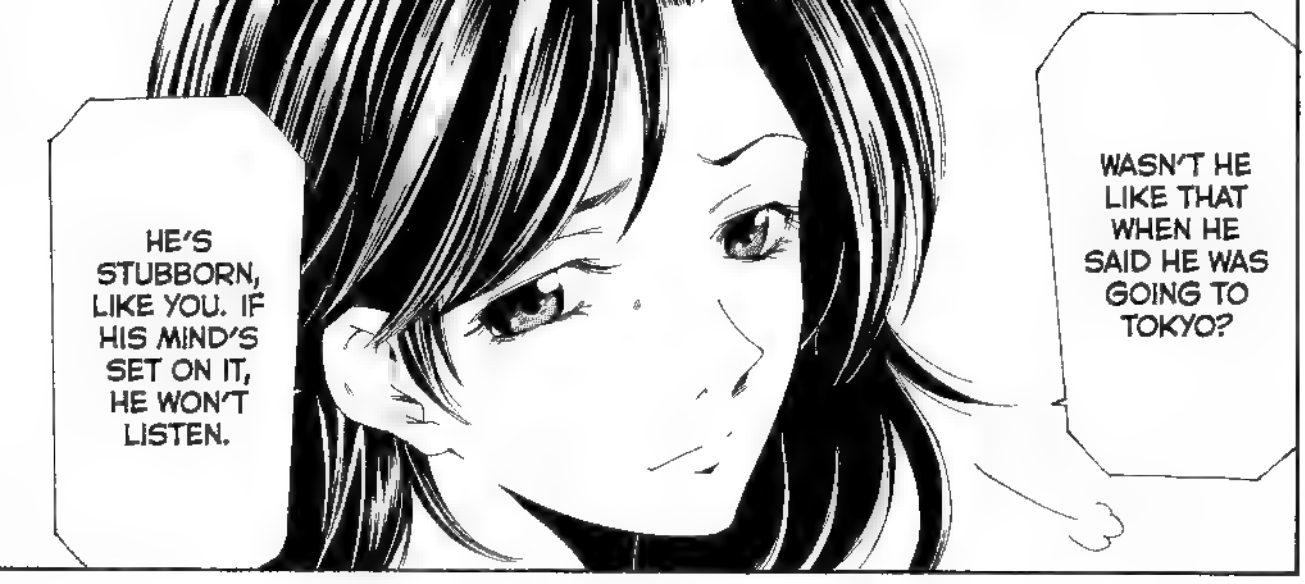
HUH ?
I'M SORRY...


...WHAT ARE YOU GONNA DO ABOUT THE BABY?
MORE IMPOR-TANTLY ...
YOU SHOULDN'T APOLOGIZE, SUZUKA-CHAN!

YOU'RE STILL GOING ON ABOUT THAT?! WE'RE NOT TALKING ABOUT A DOG OR CAT, Y'KNOW!!
WE'RE GONNA RAISE THE BABY!
I TOLD YOU, DIDN'T I?

YOU HAVE NO IDEA HOW TIRING IT IS TO RAISE A CHILD!!
THEN WHAT DO YOU SUGGEST WE DO?!
...
WH...WHAT?
ANYWAY, YOU HAVE TO THINK ABOUT WHAT SUZUKA-CHAN-
WE DE-CIDED THIS TOGETH-ER.
YOU'RE RIGHT THAT WE STILL DON'T REALLY KNOW ...
...HOW DIFFI-CULT IT IS TO RAISE A CHILD...
...BUT WE'VE DECIDED TO DO OUR BEST NO MATTER WHAT HAPPENS.

SO PLEASE ...
...LET US HAVE THIS BABY!
...!
ASAHINA ...
J... JUST HOLD ON!
SETTLE DOWN BEFORE ...
IT'S FINE, DEAR ...
THEY DECIDED THIS TOGETHER.
DEAR ...


WASN'T HE LIKE THAT WHEN HE SAID HE WAS GOING TO TOKYO?
HE'S STUBBORN, LIKE YOU. IF HIS MIND'S SET ON IT, HE WON'T LISTEN.

I WASN'T TALKING TO YOU!!
CLATTER
STOP IT, BOTH OF YOU!!
OW! OW! OW! OW!!
CLATTER

WE'RE GOING TO TALK TO THEM!
WELL... I'M NOT TOO WORRIED, BUT...
...I DON'T KNOW WHAT HER PARENTS WILL THINK...

WELL, TAKE YAMATO WITH YOU AND GO ON, THEN!
N...NOW, DEAR, WE DON'T HAVE TO RUSH.
THE TWO OF US WILL GO GREET THEM, LATER.

SO, HAVE YOU SPOKEN WITH YOUR PARENTS YET?
NO, NOT YET ...

OF COURSE WE DO!!
...
WELL... I SUP-POSE ...

...
THEN LET'S GO.

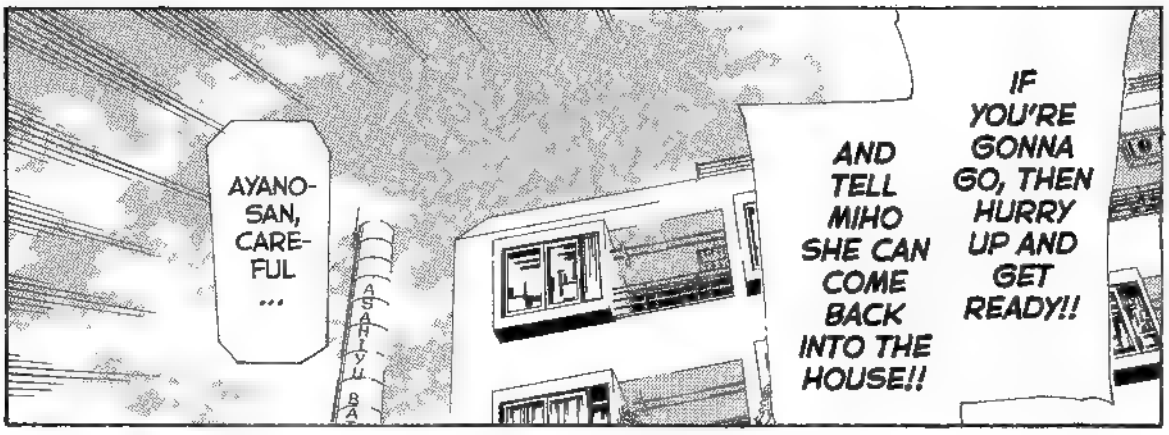
ASAHINA, IS YOUR DAD HOME TODAY?
YEAH. HE'S OFF WORK ON NEW YEAR'S ...

OKAY ...
...

HUH? AYANO-SAN, YOU ELOPED?

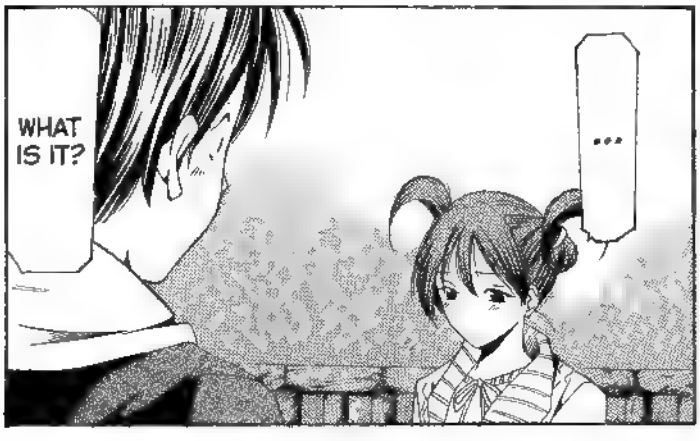
I GOT THEIR BLESSING AFTER-WARDS!!

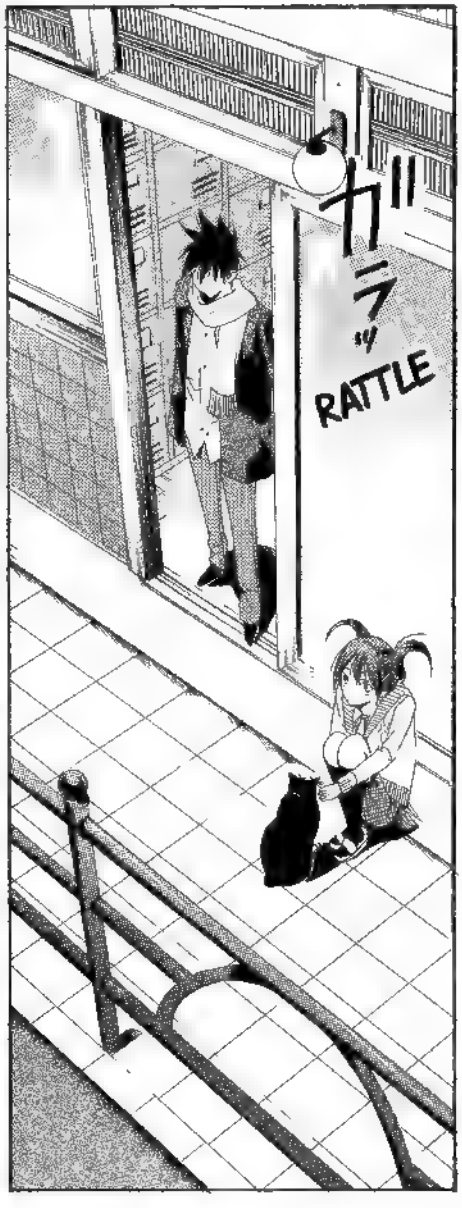
S... SIS!!
OTHER-WISE, YOU'LL HAVE TO ELOPE LIKE AYANO!
MAKE SURE YOU BOTH GET THEIR BLESS-INGS.


AYANO-SAN, CARE-FUL ...
ASAHIYU BA
IF YOU'RE GONNA GO, THEN HURRY UP AND GET READY!!
AND TELL MIHO SHE CAN COME BACK INTO THE HOUSE!!

OH... ONII-CHAN!

YOUR MOM SAID YOU CAN COME IN NOW.
SORRY, MIHO-CHAN.

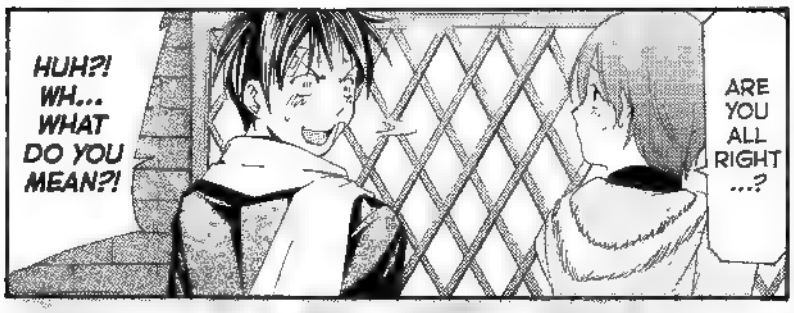

WHAT IS IT?
...


カラ
RATTLE

I'M ROOTING FOR YOU TWO!
YOU CAN DO IT!!
MIHO-CHAN...
HUH ...?
OH...AND I GUESS THIS MEANS OUR MARRIAGE DEAL IS OFF, AFTER ALL!
TOO BAAAD !!
UH... OKAY ...
DASH
THAT'S ALL! SEE YA!!

WHA ...?
SHE SURE LIKES YOU A LOT, HUH!
HA HA ...
I SEE.
WHAT DO YOU MEAN? YOU JUST GOT RE-JECTED!
I...I GUESS SO. IT'S TOUGH BEING SO POPULAR!!
HEY ...
LET'S HURRY UP!
OKAY ...!

ゴクン!
GULP


HUH?! WH... WHAT DO YOU MEAN?!
ARE YOU ALL RIGHT ...?

YOU SURE ...?
I... I'M FINE!
YOU DON'T ... LOOK SO GOOD.

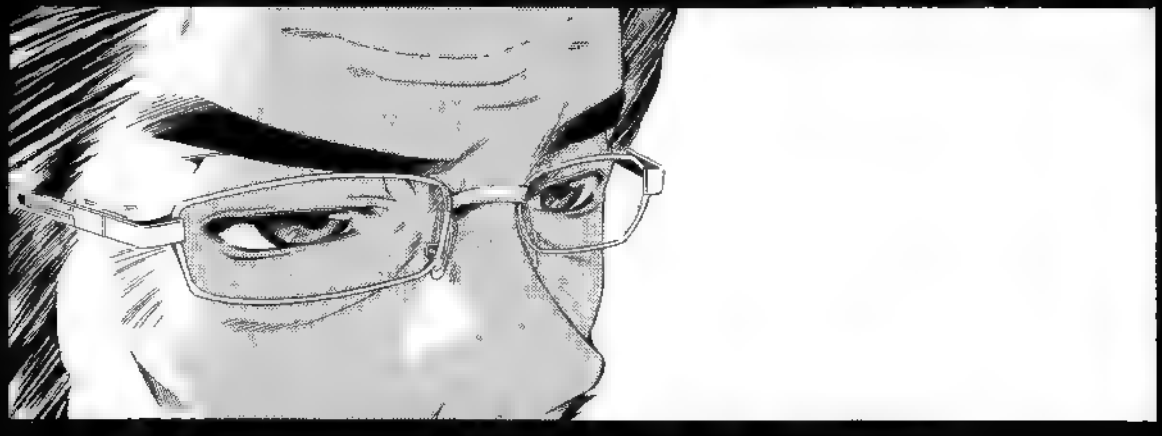
...
SO HE IS...
ANYWAY, IS YOUR FATHER REALLY HOME?
YEAH, HE IS.
MAKE SURE YOU STUDY HARD AT UNIVERSITY...
...AND DATE EACH OTHER AS RESPONSIBLE STUDENTS.
...
YEAH.
HE ...
HE'S GONNA BE SO MAD...
HUH?
YOU JUST GOT HIM TO FORGIVE YOU...
HE MIGHT ACTUALLY HIT YOU THIS TIME, YAMATO-KUN.
...
DRIP
DRIP

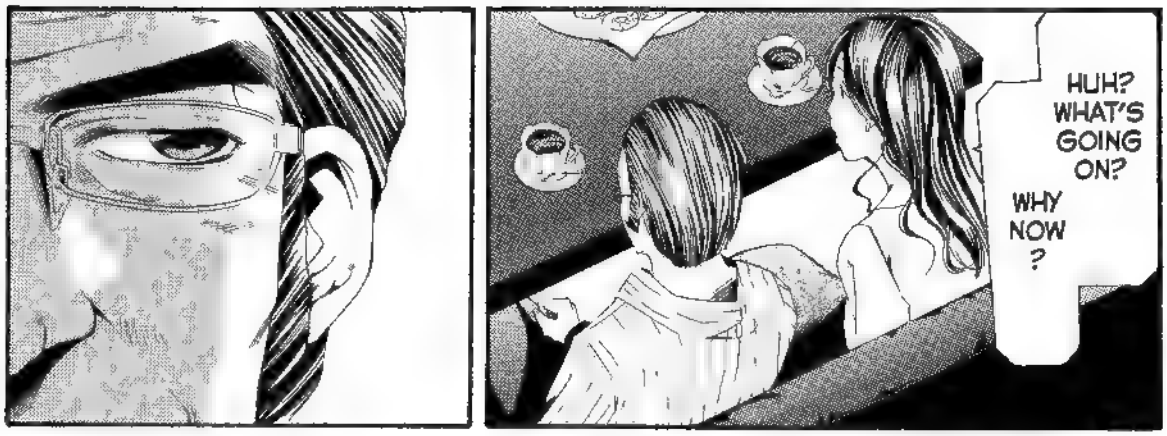
I HAVE TO TELL HIM!!
BUT ...
GRIT
YEAH...
DING DONG
ピーポー

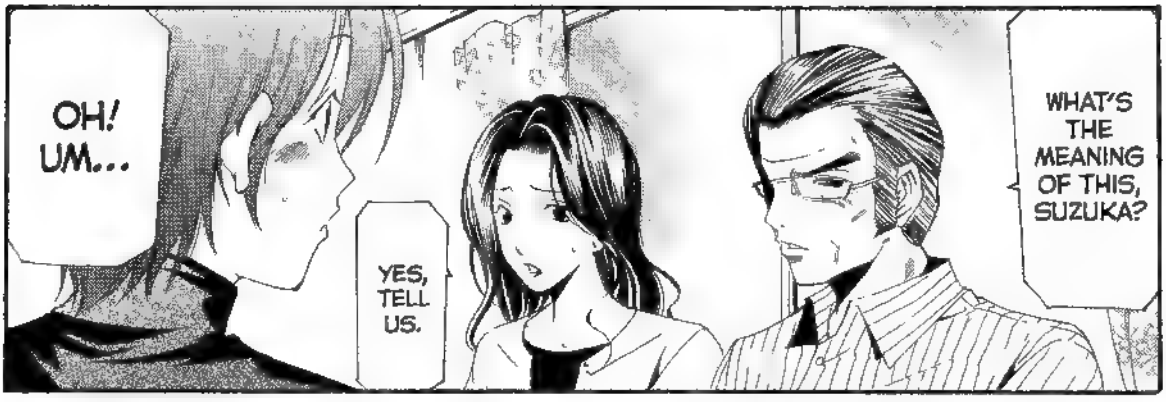
WHAT IS IT THAT YOU NEED TO TALK TO US ABOUT?
...
UM, WELL ...
I KNOW I HAD JUST PROMISED YOU THAT WE'D DATE RESPON-SIBLY...
UM...
...AND I'M TRULY SORRY, BUT...

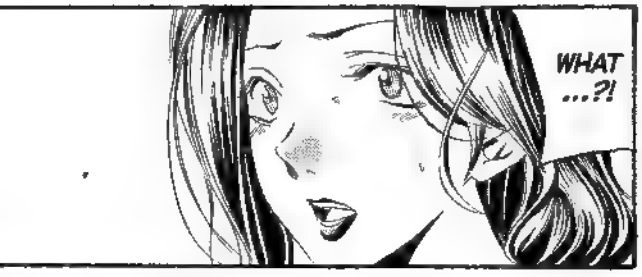
SUZUKA 涼風

#161 FAMILY




HUH? WHAT'S GOING ON?
WHY NOW ?


OH! UM...
YES, TELL US.
WHAT'S THE MEANING OF THIS, SUZUKA?


WHAT ...?!

THE TRUTH IS...
...I'M PREG-NANT.
IT'S BEEN THREE MONTHS ...

HOLD ON! ARE YOU SERIOUS ?!
THIS ISN'T SOME SORT OF MISTAKE ?!

CALM DOWN, SUZUE.
B... BUT, HONEY!
WHEN YOU SAID THERE WAS SOME-THING YOU NEEDED TO TALK TO US ABOUT...
...I HAD A FEELING IT WAS GOING TO BE THIS.

SO...?
CLINK

THEY WERE AGAINST IT, BUT I'M GONNA GET A JOB INSTEAD OF GOING TO UNIVERSITY!!
I'M PREPARED TO DO THAT!!

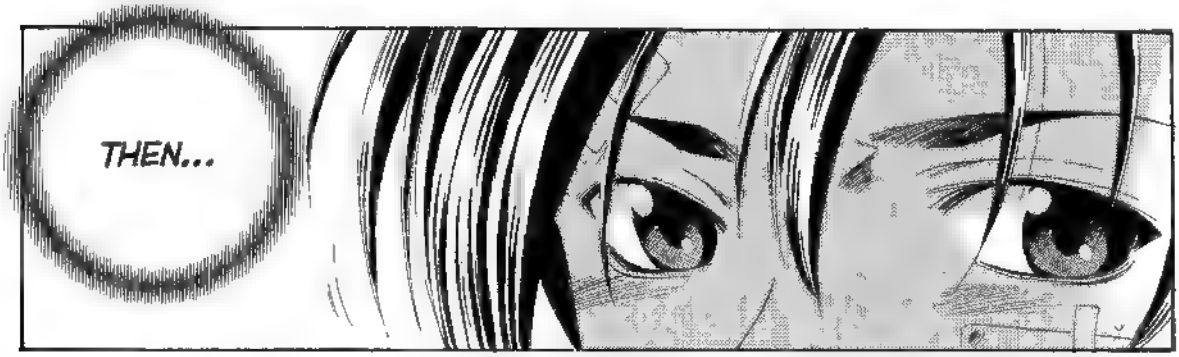
WHAT DO YOUR PARENTS THINK?
SURELY YOU MUST'VE DECIDED ON YOUR UNIVERSITY ALREADY.

ARE YOU ALL RIGHT WITH THIS, SUZUKA?
YEAH ...
I KNOW I'M BEING SELFISH BUT...
...I WANT TO HAVE THE BABY.
SUZUKA...
FINE ...
ADJUST
IF YOU'RE THAT SET ON HAVING THE BABY, THEN I WON'T STOP YOU.
HUH ...?!
REALLY ?!

HOW-EVER ...
YOU WILL END YOUR RELATION-SHIP WITH YAMATO-KUN.
HUH ...?
...
HEY ...
H... HON-EY!
WE WILL RAISE THE CHILD HERE...

WHY WOULD YOU SAY THAT?!
THAT'S TERRIBLE, DAD!!
I...I SWEAR I'M GONNA GET WORK, AND I PROMISE I WON'T BURDEN-
IT'S NOT UP FOR DISCUSS-SION.
SLAM!!!
UH ...!!
HA!!
CLATTER

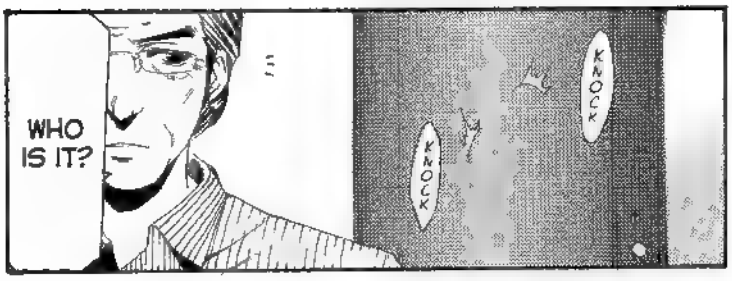
YA-MATO-KUN ...
WHAT THE HECK...?
SHE CAN HAVE THE BABY, BUT HAS TO BREAK UP WITH ME?

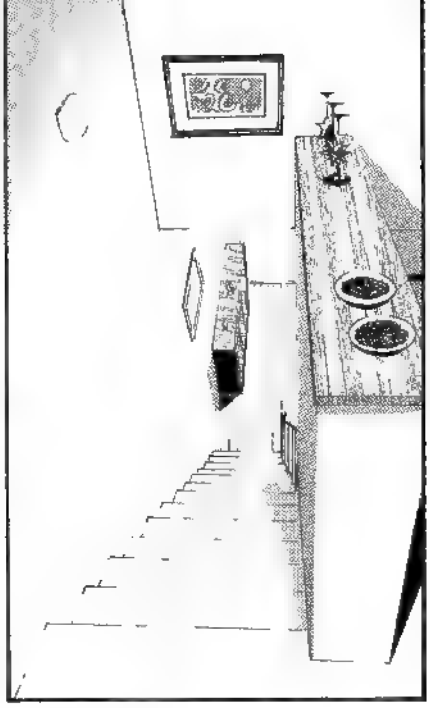

THEN...

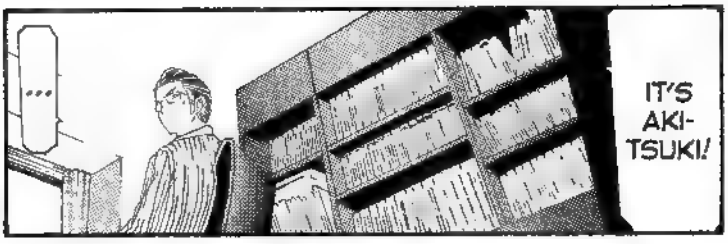
HUH ?
WAIT, YA-MATO-KUN!
I'M GONNA TRY TALKING TO HIM AGAIN!!

F!!! BOOM
EEK !
WHAT THE HECK ?!
UH, SOR-RY !!

THERE'S NO POINT TO IT!!


WHO IS IT?
KNOCK
KNOCK




...
IT'S AKI-TSUKI!

SORRY TO BOTHER YOU!
KER-CHAK

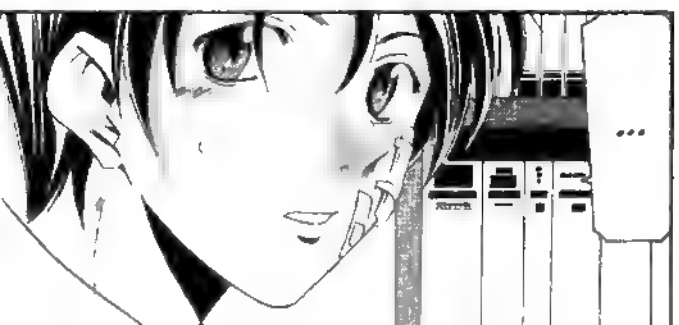
COME IN.

DO YOU STILL NEED SOME-THING?
PLEASE !!
I'LL SERI-OUSLY DO EVERYTHING I CAN, SO PLEASE LET ME MARRY HER!!

RUSTLE
CURRENT PROFIT
MONTHLY
(PER 1000 YEN)
CURRENT MONTH
PREVIOUS PERIOD
CREAK
UH...
THUD
YOU CAN HAVE A SEAT.
UH... OKAY.
TAKE A LOOK.
HUH?

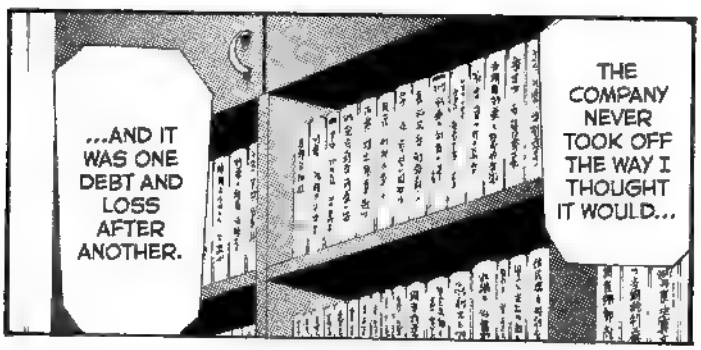
WHAT IS THIS?
FLAP
AN ALBUM ?
ERAL HOSPITAL
Hospital Discharge, Suzuka at 0 years

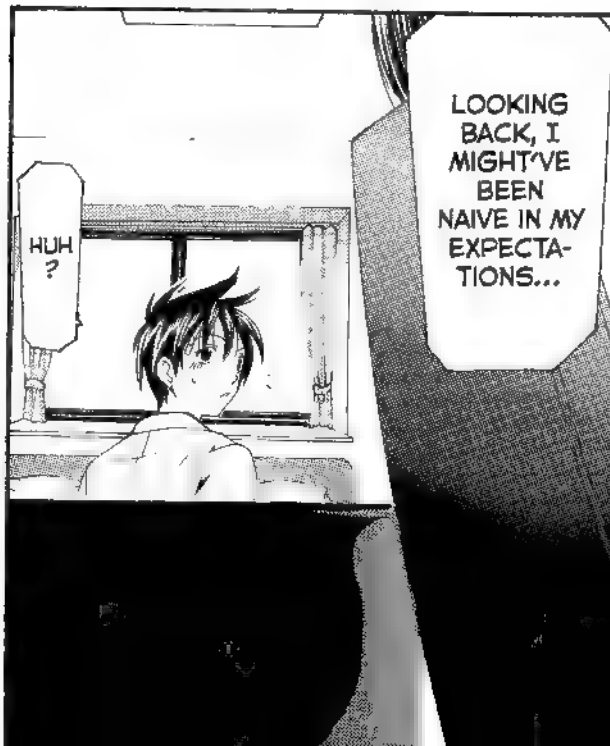
DUR-ING THAT TIME ...
...SUZU-KA WAS BORN.

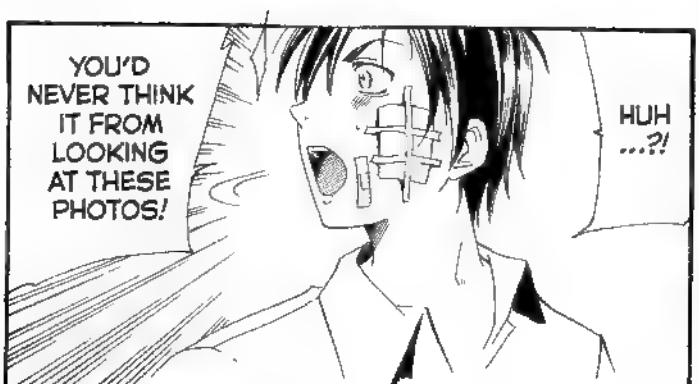

...

I HAD A JOB THAT I BADLY WANTED TO DO.
I DISRE-GARDED THE OBJECTIONS OF THOSE AROUND ME, AND BUILT THE COM-PANY I HAVE TODAY.
HUH ?

SIGN. CONGRATULATIONS ON YOUR FIRST DAY

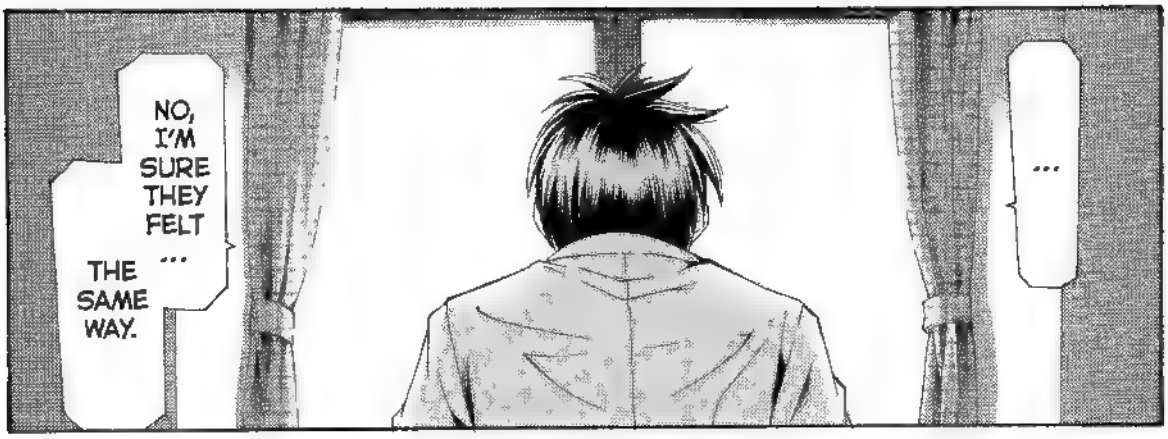






...I'VE BEEN ABLE TO DO MY BEST 'TIL THIS VERY DAY...
THAT'S EXACTLY WHY...
SUZUNE AND SUZUKA ARE THE REASON I LIVE.
FOR THEM, I WILL ENDURE ANY HARD-SHIP.
THAT'S THE ESSENCE OF PARENT-HOOD.

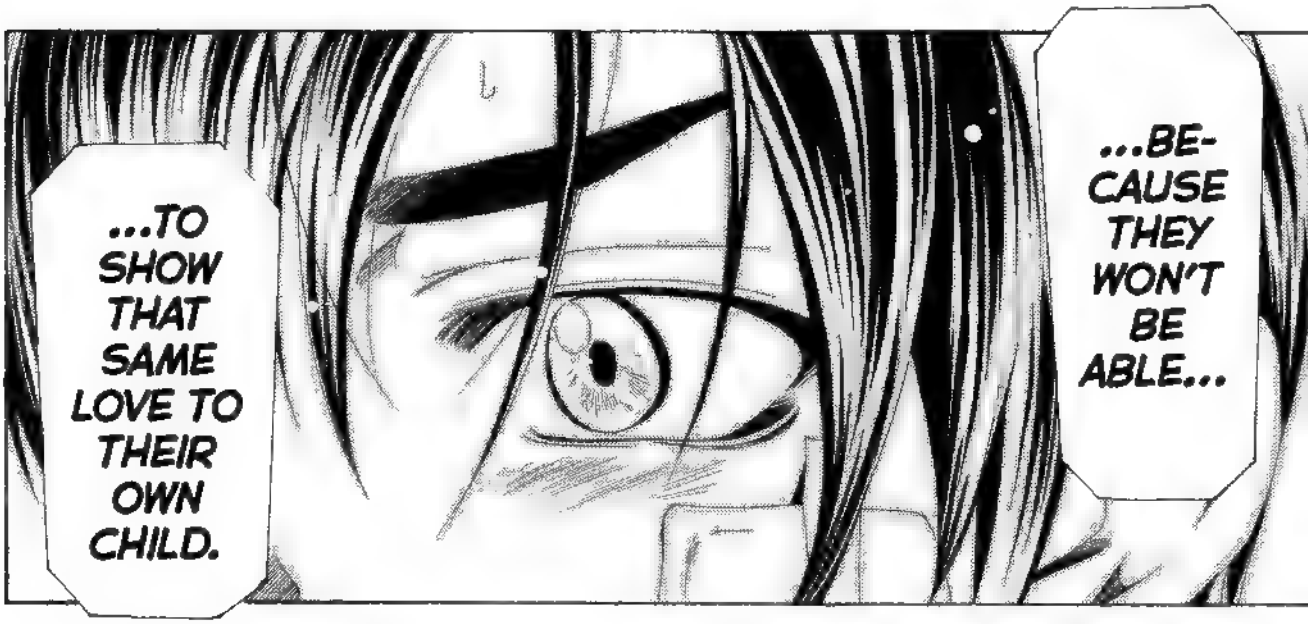
...
I'M SURE YOUR PARENTS FEEL THE SAME WAY.
THAT'S ENOUGH, DEAR! FORGIVE THE BOY!
I GUESS SO!!
HEY, YAMATO! YOU CAUGHT A BIG ONE!!
広島
DON'T GO WALKING AT NIGHT TIME, OKAY?! IT'S DANGEROUS!!
MAKE SURE TO LISTEN TO AYANO-SAN WHILE YOU'RE IN TOKYO, OKAY?!
AM I WRONG ...?
GIVE US A CALL WHENEVER SOMETHING HAPPENS, OKAY?!


NO, I'M SURE THEY FELT ... THE SAME WAY.
...

...AND HOW MUCH THEY LOOKED FORWARD TO YOUR FUTURE?

YOU SAID EARLIER THAT YOU AREN'T GOING TO UNIVER-SITY...
BUT HAVE YOU EVER GIVEN ANY THOUGHT...
...TO WHAT YOUR PARENTS ENDURED TO RAISE YOU...
NITTSU

A CHILD DOESN'T NEED TO REPAY A PARENT'S KINDNESS, BUT...
...THOSE WHO DON'T UNDERSTAND THAT SACRIFICE ARE UNFIT FOR PARENTHOOD...


...BECAUSE THEY WON'T BE ABLE...
...TO SHOW THAT SAME LOVE TO THEIR OWN CHILD.

IT'S POINTLESS TO EXPECT THAT YOU'D UNDERSTAND.
CREAK
AH, WELL ...
YOU'RE STILL 18.

GRIP

I'M SORRY ...

I'VE BEEN ...
SELFISH ...

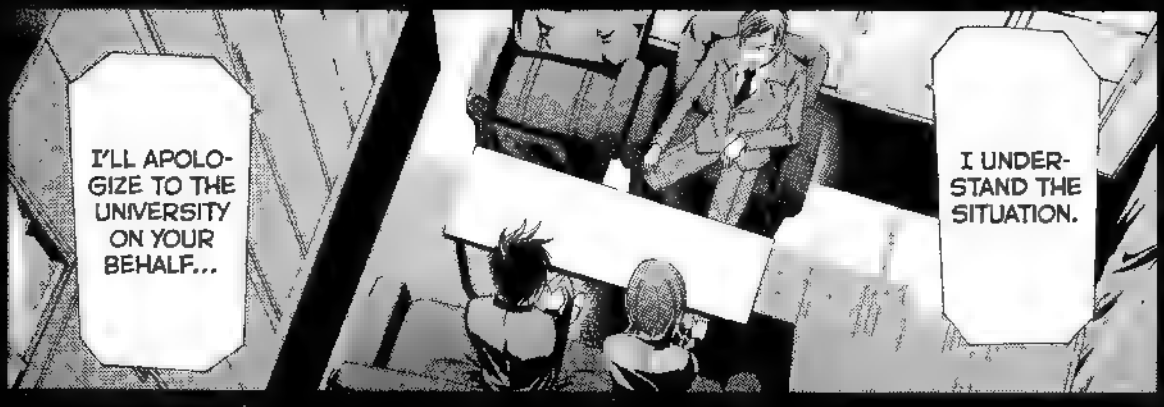
WHEN I GO HOME, I'LL APOLOGIZE TO THEM...
ABOUT QUIT-TING UNIVER-SITY...
ABOUT MAKING THEM COME TO TOKYO...

LET ME BE CLEAR.
HUH?

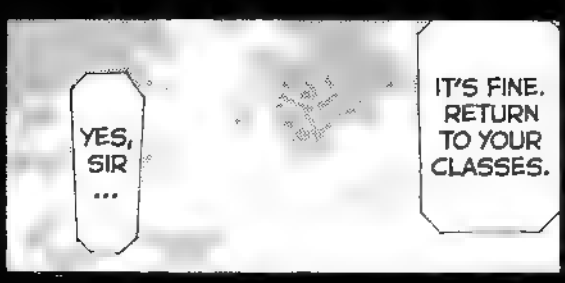
...

I DON'T PLAN ON...
...GIVING YOU ANY FINANCIAL SUPPORT, OKAY?
...!
YES, SIR ...!
I'LL DO MY BEST ...!!

STUDENT GUIDANCE OFFICE
WELL, WELL ...


I'LL APOLOGIZE TO THE UNIVERSITY ON YOUR BEHALF...
I UNDERSTAND THE SITUATION.

I DON'T THINK YOU'LL BE SUSPENDED OVER THIS, THOUGH.
FOR NOW, I'LL BE BRINGING THIS MATTER TO THE STAFF MEETING...


YES, SIR ...
IT'S FINE. RETURN TO YOUR CLASSES.

...
SORRY ...

#162 FRIENDS
SUZUKA
涼風

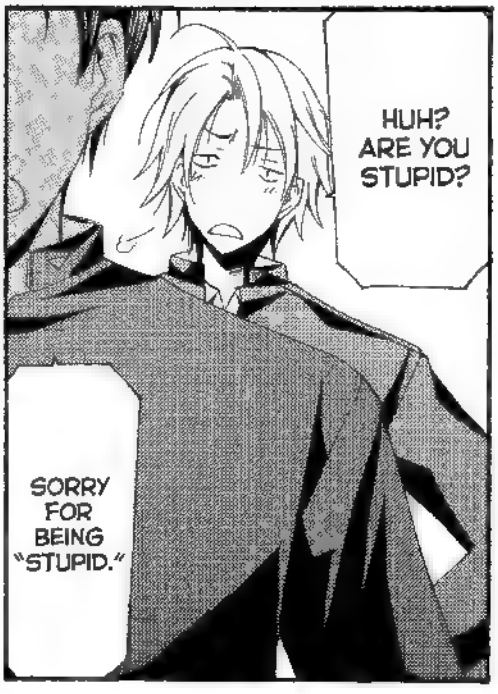
HE WASN'T AS ANGRY AS I THOUGHT ...
YEAH ...
TMP
TMP
HUH ?
UH, NOTH-ING ...
WHAT ARE YOU THINK-ING?
OH, BY THE WAY, YOU'RE GOING TO THE HOSPITAL TODAY IN THE AF-TERNOON, RIGHT?
YEAH. IT'S A REG-ULAR CHECK-UP...

SORRY I CAN'T GO WITH YOU. TAKE CARE, OKAY?
THANKS. I'LL BE FINE.
SEE YA.
3—A
LATER...
RATTLE
RATTLE
...
I KNOW! YOU GUYS GOT CAUGHT FOR GOING ON THAT TRIP TOGETHER, RIGHT?
THAT WAS IT, WASN'T IT?
YO, YAMATO!
QUITE THE DELINQUENT, BEING CALLED SO EARLY IN THE NEW TERM!
...
NO, IT WASN'T THAT.

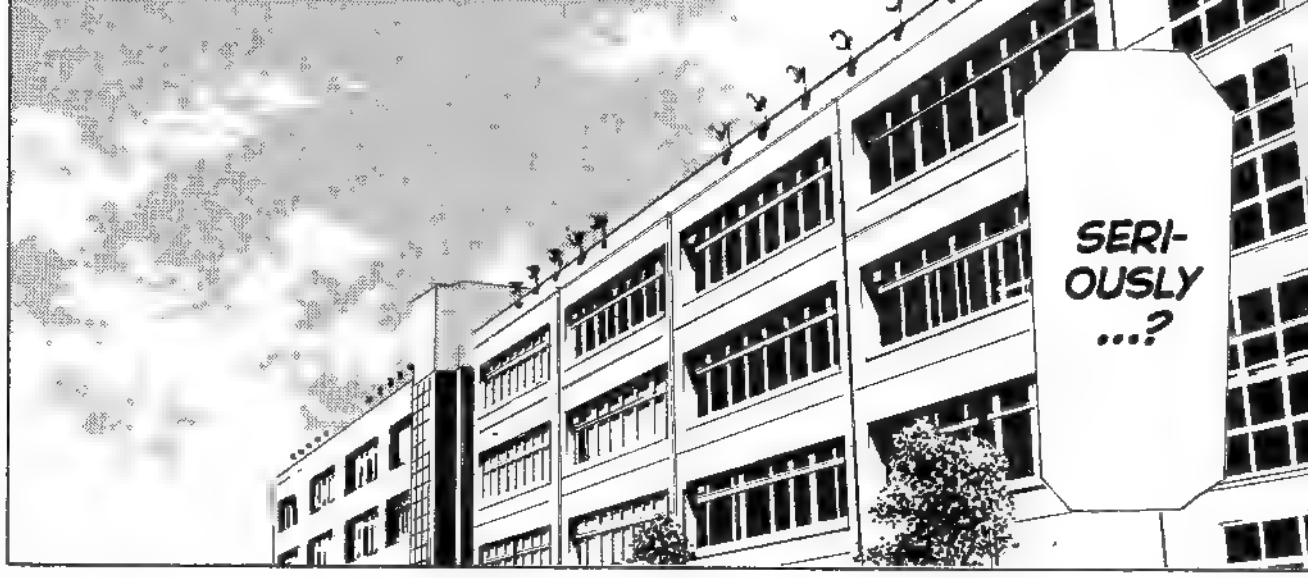
HEY, C'MON! TELL ME! I WON'T TELL ANYONE.
...
HUH? THEN WHAT WAS IT?
DID SOME-THING ELSE HAPPEN?

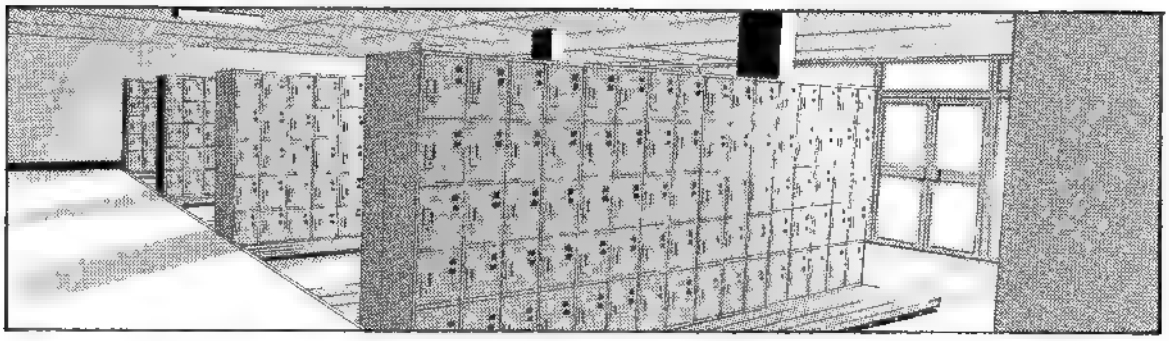
...WE'VE DECIDED TO GET MARRIED INSTEAD OF GOING TO UNIVERSITY.
ASAHINA'S PREGNANT, SO...

WHAT?!
C'MON!!
I'M NOT JOK-ING!
QUIT JOKING AROUND AND TELL ME WHAT'S REALLY GOING ON, YAMATO.


HUH? ARE YOU STUPID?
SORRY FOR BEING "STUPID."

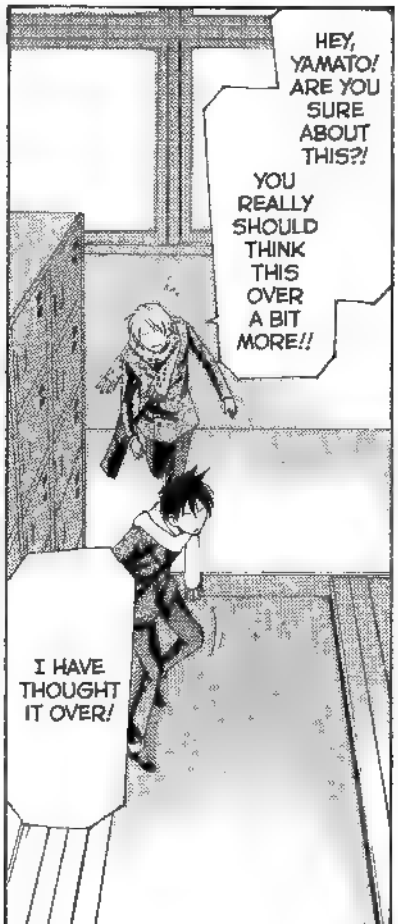
...
...


SERI-
OUSLY
...?



HOLD ON, MAN! YOU'RE ALWAYS SO FLIPPANT LIKE THIS...
ANYWAY, I HAVE SOME-THING TO TAKE CARE OF, SO...

STAND
HM?


HEY, YAMATO! ARE YOU SURE ABOUT THIS?!
YOU REALLY SHOULD THINK THIS OVER A BIT MORE!!
I HAVE THOUGHT IT OVER!

SEMPAI ...
...
YOU HAVE A MINUTE ...
...AKI-TSUKI?
HUH ?
HATTORI... SORRY, BUT COULD YOU GIVE US SOME PRIVACY?
UH, SURE ...
...
LET'S GO TALK IN THE COURT-YARD...

I THOUGHT YOU WERE GONNA BEAT ME UP...
IF THAT WOULD SOLVE THINGS, I'D DO IT.
...DIDN'T YOU TELL ME WHEN WE MET EARLIER?
WHY ...
C'MON! PRAC-TICE IS START-ING!!
OH NO! WE'RE GONNA GET IN TROUBLE AGAIN!!
I'M SORRY.
AT THAT TIME, I DIDN'T KNOW WHAT TO DO.
WELL ...
WHAT YOU GUYS CHOOSE TO DO IN YOUR FUTURE ...
...IS ENTIRELY UP TO YOU.

HOW-EVER ...
BOTH OF YOU GOT ADMITTED THROUGH RECOM-MENDATION, AND BY THROW-ING THAT AWAY...
...OUR UNIVER-SITY HAS LOST TWO PROMISING ATHLETES.
WE'VE ALSO LOST THE PROMISING ATHLETES WHO COULD'VE HAD A CHANCE AT GETTING ACCEPTED INSTEAD OF YOU.
...YOUR ACTIONS AFFECT THOSE AROUND YOU.
...THE GUYS WHO COMPETED IN THE TRYOUTS WITH YOU.
AMONG THEM...

JOLT

AND FROM THIS INCIDENT ...
...THE AOBA HIGH TRACK TEAM HAS LOST ALL CREDIBILITY.

IT'S UNLIKELY THAT ANY UNIVERSITY WILL PICK A TRACK ATHLETE...
...FROM THIS HIGH SCHOOL AGAIN.

THOSE ARE THE CONSE-QUENCES ...
...OF YOUR ACTIONS.

I SEE ...
IF YOU DID, THEN THAT'S FINE.
DO WHAT YOU WANT.

WHEN I DE-CIDED ...
...TO REJECT MY OFFER OF ACCEP-TANCE ...
...I KNEW SOME-THING LIKE THIS WOULD HAPPEN.

...REALLY LET ME DOWN.
YOU...
TMP
TMP
...
SORRY ...
I SHOULD ...
...GO APOLOGIZE ...

HM?
TMP
ASAHINA... I THOUGHT YOU WERE GOING TO THE HOSPITAL ...
YEAH. IT ENDED EARLY, SO I CAME BACK.
'CAUSE WE REALLY SHOULD ...
...APOL-OGIZE TO EVERYONE ON THE TRACK TEAM.
...
YEAH ...
OH ...

HUH? IT'S AKITSUKI SEMPAI.
HM?
OH... SUZUKA! WHERE DID YOU GO?!
UH NO
HMPH! ARE YOU TWO SKIPPING PRACTICE SO YOU CAN FOOL AROUND TOGETHER?
AT THIS RATE, THEY MIGHT WITHDRAW THOSE RECOMMENDATIONS TOO, HUH?
...
HUH?

I'M SORRY.

...

SO...WE REJECTED OUR OFFER OF ACCEPTANCE TODAY, TOO.

YEAH ...

YOU REJECTED IT...?

Y...

H...HEY, ARE YOU SERIOUS ...?

HURMUR

ARE YOU REALLY PREGNANT ...?

HURMUR

THERE'S NO WAY IN HELL THEY'RE GONNA GET RECOM-MENDED INTO SEIJO U NOW!!
THAT'S GREAT FOR YOU GUYS, BUT WHAT IS EVERYONE ELSE ON THE TEAM GONNA DO?!
WHAT THE HELL, MAN?! DO YOU KNOW WHAT THAT MEANS ?!
GRAB
...
...
REALLY !!
WE'RE SORRY.
...
HUH ?
THAT'S ENOUGH, SEMPAI ...
THAT'S ENOUGH !!
STOP, KOBA-YAKAWA !!
SCREW THAT!! YOUR APOL-OGIES MEAN NOTH-ING!!
YOU GUYS AREN'T TAKING ANY RESPONSI-BILITY!

WE KNOW HOW HARD AKITSUKI AND ASAHINA-SEMPAI PRACTICED ON THE TRACK TEAM...
SO WE KNOW HOW HARD IT WAS FOR THEM TO REJECT THE UNIVERSITY'S OFFER OF ACCEPTANCE.

HUH?
TSU-YOSHI...

BESIDES, IF WE REALLY WANT TO GO TO SEIJO U, WE CAN STILL GET IN THROUGH GENERAL ADMISSION!
WE AREN'T DUMB LIKE YOU, AKITSUKI-SEMPAI!!

IT'S OKAY, SEMPAI! DON'T WORRY ABOUT US!
SEIJO U ISN'T THE ONLY UNI-VERSITY, ANYWAY!

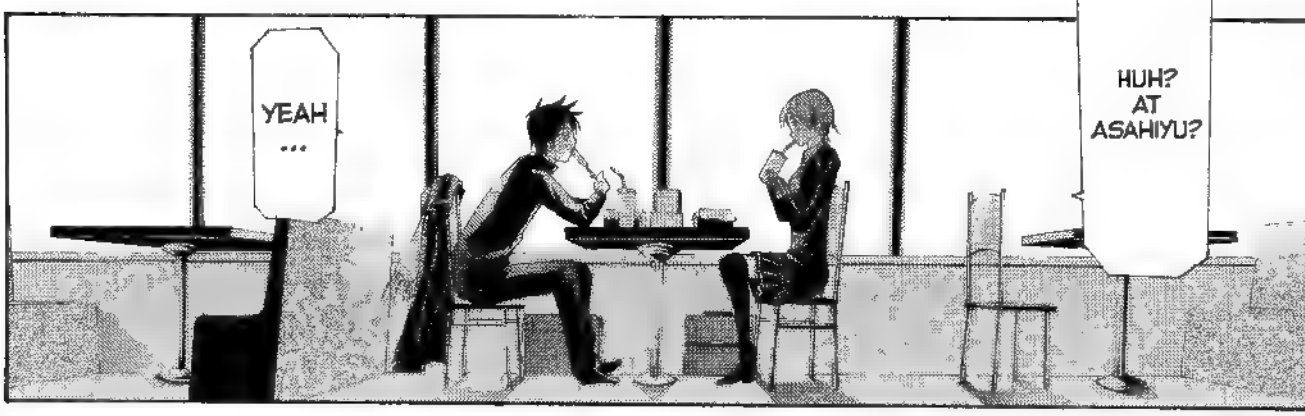
...

SO, ASAHINA-SEMPAI, DO YOUR BEST TO HAVE A HEALTHY BABY!!
WE'RE ROOTING FOR YOU!
TCH... SO I'M THE BAD GUY? WELL, NOT THAT I CARE.
NO, YOU'RE NOT!
YOU'RE A GOOD SEMPAI, TOO!
THANK YOU...
ALL OF YOU ...

I WAS PLANNING ON BEATING HIM UP IF HE DIDN'T GO APOLOGIZE TO HIS TEAM-MATES.
TOO BAD.
IF YOU WANT TO SUPPORT THEM, YOU COULD'VE JUST TOLD THEM THAT.
RUSTLE
HMPH I'LL SEND THEM A WEDDING GIFT EVEN-TUALLY
LET'S GO, MIYA-MOTO.
UH... SEM-PAI!
...
WELL ...
GIVE IT YOUR BEST, YOU TWO.

#163 THE JOB SEARCH

RELAX IN ONE OF OUR 52 SEATS
WOS BURGER


HUH? AT ASAHIYU?
YEAH ...

SINCE IT'LL PROBABLY BE EXPENSIVE FOR THE TWO OF US TO RENT A NEW HOUSE AND MOVE IN...
...AYANO-SAN SAID THAT WE CAN LIVE AT ASAHIYU FOR A WHILE UNTIL THINGS SETTLE DOWN.
THAT'D HELP, BUT...
...I'D FEEL BAD.

SHE SAID SHE HASN'T FOUND A TENANT FOR YOUR ROOM, ANYWAY...
...SO IT'D HELP HER TOO IF YOU MOVED IN.
R... REALLY? WELL, THAT'S GOOD...
BUT I KINDA FEEL SILLY ...
MOVING OUT AND THEN COMING BACK.
WELL, THAT WAS MY FAULT, SO...
CLATTER
THE REAL ISSUE, THOUGH, IS ME GETTING A JOB...
HUH?

I ASKED THE SCHOOL WHETHER THERE ARE ANY JOB OPENINGS, BUT...
...THEY SAID THAT THE DEADLINES HAVE ALREADY PASSED.

...
YEAH, MAKES SENSE...

...
AS LONG AS I DON'T EXPECT TOO MUCH, I'M SURE THERE'S SOME-THING OUT THERE.
BUT I CAN'T BE SURE ...

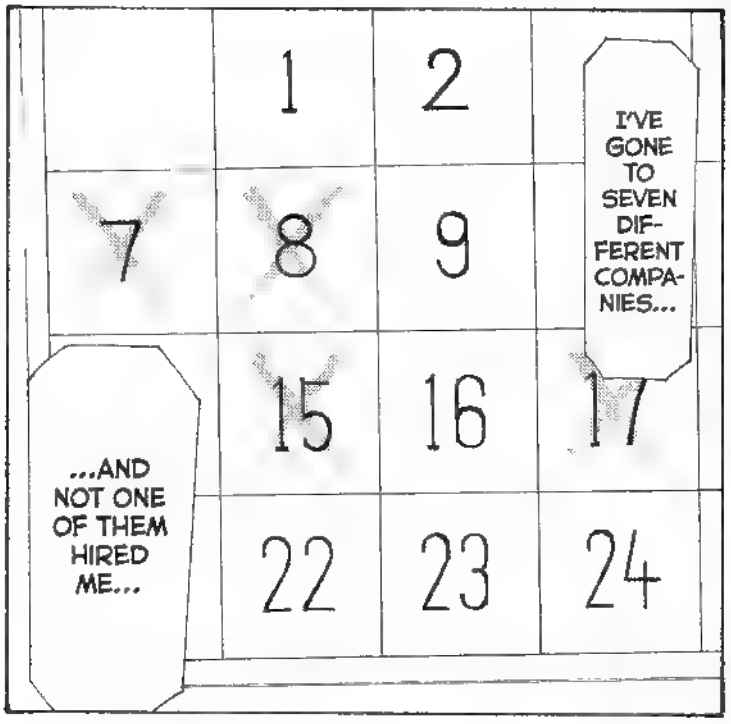
THEN, WHAT ARE YOU GONNA DO?
LET'S SEE ...
HMM. FOR NOW, I'M GONNA CHECK OUT THE CLASSIFIED ADS.

HUH? WHY?
I MEAN, YOU WANT TO CONTINUE IT, DON'T YOU?
IF POS-SIBLE ...
...I HOPE IT'S A COMPANY THAT HAS A TRACK TEAM.
I MEAN, WE'RE GONNA HAVE A BABY.
WELL, IT'D BE NICE, BUT...
...THIS ISN'T THE TIME TO WORRY ABOUT THAT.
ANYWAY, I'LL LET YOU KNOW WHEN I FIND SOME-THING.
DON'T WORRY. JUST HANG ON, ASAHINA!
YEAH ...
OKAY. GOT IT.
52 SEATS

INTER-VIEW HALL 2F
CHATTER
CHATTER
YIKES ...
THERE ARE QUITE A FEW PEOPLE HERE...
MAN, I HOPE I'LL BE OKAY ...
BADUMP
BADUMP
I'M REALLY NER-VOUS ...
NEXT PERSON, PLEASE.
!!
KER-CHAK
Y... YES!!
NO POINT THINKING ABOUT IT!!
I GOTTA GO FOR BROKE!!

COME IN... HAVE A SEAT.
KER-CHAK
H... HELLO!!
YES, SIR!!
HA HA! QUITE THE ENERGY YOU HAVE THERE.
YOU DON'T NEED TO BE SO TENSE. RELAX.
YES, SIR!!
WHY DID YOU CHOOSE TO APPLY TO OUR COMPANY?
FLAP
SO... LET'S SEE... AKITSUKI-KUN...
UH... AKITSUKI-KUN, YOU'RE TALKING ABOUT US WHEN YOU SAY "THEY," RIGHT?
UH... THEY HAVE A VERY GOOD CORPORATE CULTURE, AND THE DESCRIPTION THEY—
YES, SIR!!
OH YEAH!! SORRY, MY MISTAKE!!
WILL DO, SIR!!

301
YAMATO AKITSUKI


1
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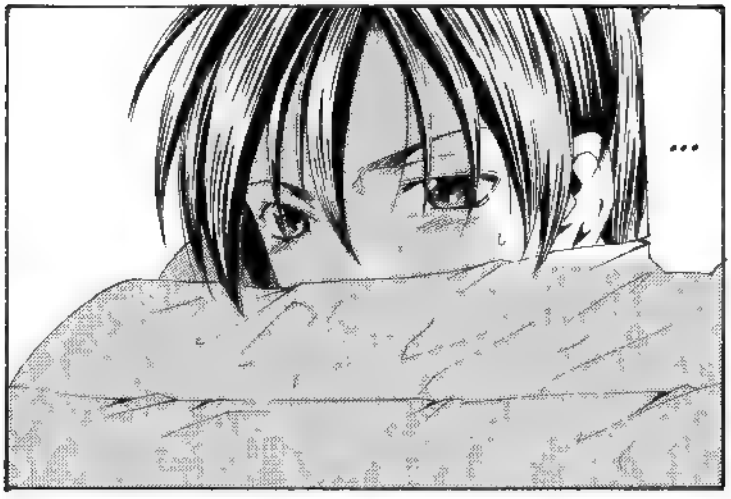
24
I'VE GONE TO SEVEN DIF-FERENT COMPA-NIES...
...AND NOT ONE OF THEM HIRED ME...

SIGH
FWUMP


...

IT REALLY IS HARD TO GET A JOB AROUND THIS TIME, AFTER ALL.
I CAN'T FACE ASAHINA LIKE THIS...
...AFTER I TOLD HER TO TRUST ME.
...
CORPORATIONS YUGAWA CLOTHI
I'M GONNA HAVE A BABY!!
NO! NO! NO!!
BOLT
FLAP
FLAP
I CAN'T LEAVE THINGS LIKE THIS!!
I GOTTA GET WORK AT ALL COSTS!!

IT DOESN'T MATTER WHAT KINDA JOB I GET!!
IT CAN BE FAR AWAY FROM MY PLACE!!
AT ANY RATE, I GOTTA GET HIRED SOME-HOW ...
JOB SEARCH INFORMATION
RRRING
RRRING
HM ...?

INCOMING SUZUKA ASAHINA

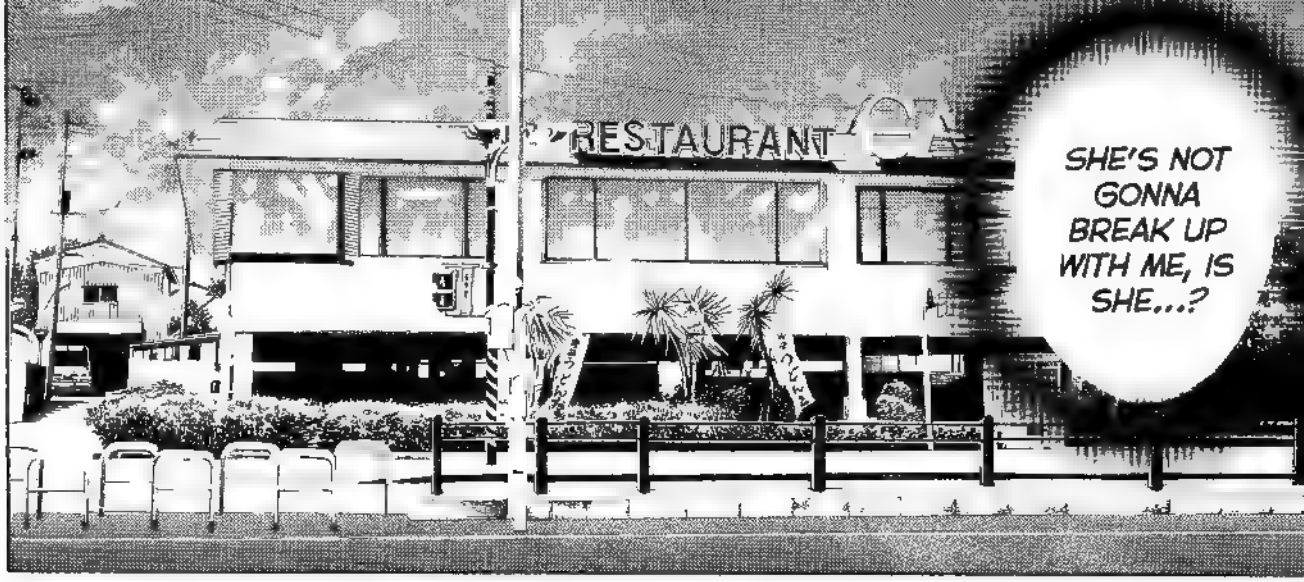
IT'S ASA-HINA ...
...

...WITH THE JOB SEARCH?
HOW ARE THINGS GOING ...

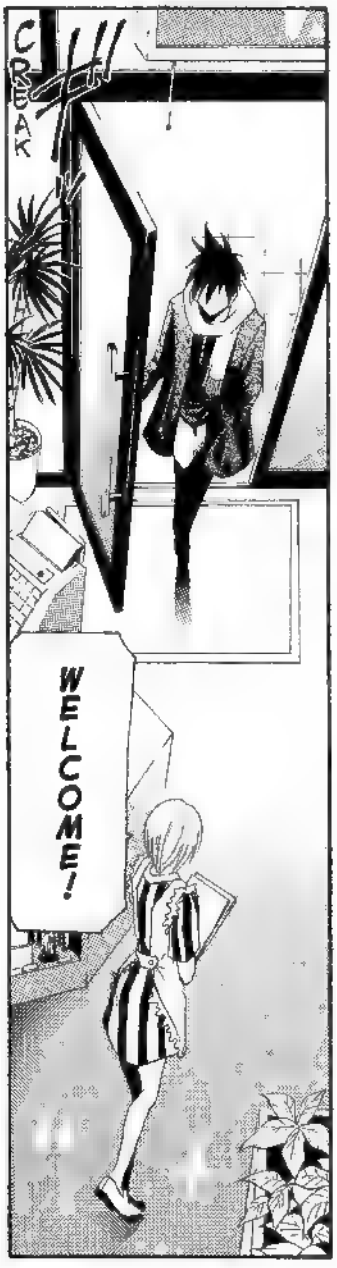
WELL ... UM ...
UH...

Y... YES ...
H... HELLO ...?
UH... YA-MATO-KUN?

NONE OF THEM PANNED OUT, HUH?
SPLURT
YOU DON'T EVEN HAVE TO TELL ME!
HEY, WHY DON'T YOU TAKE A BREAK FROM THAT AND COME MEET ME?
HUH?
UH, B... BUT... IT'LL BE FINE!!
I'M GONNA TAKE CARE OF THIS!!
EVEN IF IT'S A PART-TIME JOB...
I HAVE SOME-THING IMPORT-ANT TO TELL YOU.
I'LL BE AT THE RESTAU-RANT WE ALWAYS GO TO.
HUH? YOU CAN'T TELL ME OVER THE PHONE?
I WANT TO TELL YOU IN PERSON, SO COME QUICKLY!
UH... SURE ...
OKAY, THEN ...
WH... WHAT COULD BE SO IMPORT-ANT...?


RESTAURANT
SHE'S NOT GONNA BREAK UP WITH ME, IS SHE...?

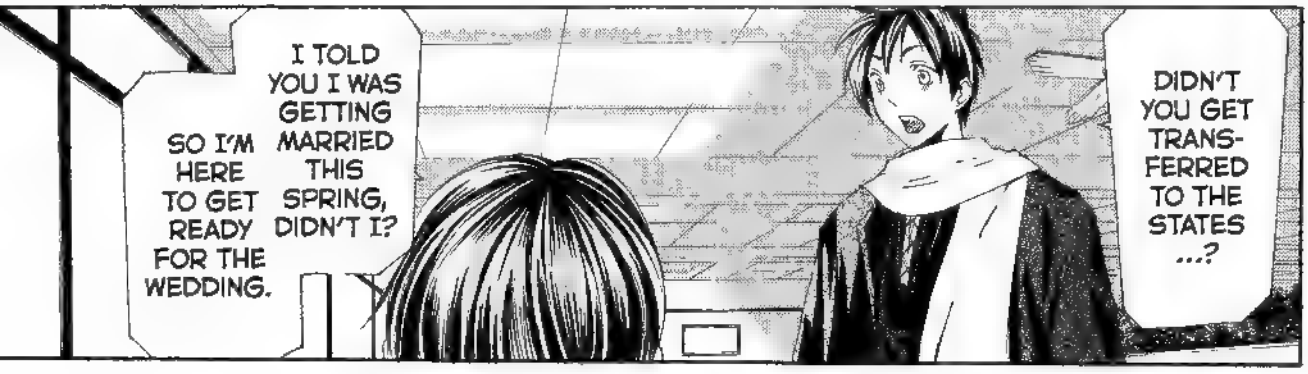
OH, YAMATO-KUN! OVER HERE!


CREAK
WELCOME!

ASA-HINA ...
WHAT DID YOU NEED TO TALK TO ME ABOUT?

LONG TIME NO SEE!
HUH ...?

S... SASAOKA-SAN!!


I TOLD YOU I WAS GETTING MARRIED THIS SPRING, DIDN'T I?
SO I'M HERE TO GET READY FOR THE WEDDING.
DIDN'T YOU GET TRANS-FERRED TO THE STATES ...?

SO, WHAT BRINGS YOU HERE TODAY?

HUH ...?
I GOT A CALL FROM SUZUKA-CHAN...
...SO WE DECIDED TO MEET UP AND TALK.

ANYWAY, I HEARD THE NEWS FROM SUZUKA-CHAN.
WELL, I MEAN... CONGRAT-ULATIONS!! WHAT GREAT NEWS!!
UH... THANK YOU...

HUH ?
YOU'RE LOOKING FOR WORK, RIGHT?
IF SO, A COMPANY THAT WE DEAL WITH IS CURRENTLY HIRING, SO I CAN RECOMMEND YOU TO THEM.
OR HAVE YOU FOUND SOME-THING ELSE?
UH...NO! NONE OF THEM WORKED OUT...
THEN, THAT'S GREAT.
THE COMPANY HAS A TRACK TEAM, TOO, WHICH SUZUKA-CHAN WANTED.
A...A TRACK TEAM ?!
SO YOU REALLY WANTED TO CONTINUE, AFTER ALL!
HUH ...?

...AND MORE IMPORTANTLY, I FELT LIKE YOU WANTED TO KEEP UP WITH IT, TOO...
IT WOULD BE A TOTAL WASTE IF YOU GAVE UP ON TRACK NOW...
AND IF THAT'S THE CASE, I WANT TO DO WHATEVER I CAN TO MAKE THAT HAPPEN FOR YOU...
...SO I ASKED SASAOKA-SAN.
OH, DON'T WORRY ABOUT THAT. THE COMPANY HAS BEEN INCREASING THEIR PROFITS SINCE LAST YEAR, SO THEY'RE APPARENTLY HIRING A LOT OF PEOPLE.
BUT... UM... ARE YOU SURE? IT WON'T BE AN INCONVE-NIENCE AT THIS LATE STAGE?
...
ASA-HINA ...

THINK OF TRACK AS AN AFTER-WORK ACTIVITY.
WHILE THEY HAVE A TRACK TEAM, YOU'LL NEED TO GET YOUR WORK DONE.

...

AND YOU'LL HAVE YOUR HANDS FULL LEARNING THE ROPES AS SOON AS YOU JOIN THE COMPANY, SO THERE WON'T BE MUCH TIME FOR TRACK...
TH... THAT'S NOT A PROB-LEM, BUT...

IS SOME-THING WRONG, YAMATO-KUN?
UH... NOTH-ING... I JUST ...

I JUST KINDA FEEL PATHETIC ...
I TOLD YOU TO LEAVE THINGS TO ME...
...AND IN THE END, YOU'RE THE ONE WHO FINDS ME A JOB...
THAT DOESN'T MATTER.

I DON'T THINK THAT SHOULD BOTHER YOU.
HUH ...?

THE IMPORT-ANT THING IS THAT, GOING FOR-WARD ...
...YOU DO YOUR BEST FOR SUZUKA-CHAN.

AND THAT YOU MAKE...
...YOUR FUTURE CHILD HAPPY.
YEAH ...
IT'S GONNA BE TOUGH WORKING FOR THE BOTH OF US, YAMATO-KUN.
ASA-HINA...
OKAY...
I'M GONNA WORK HARD ...
...FOR THE BOTH OF US.

2006
AOBA
HIGH
SCHOOL
GRAD-
UATION
CERE-
MONY
WOW. SO ALL OF YOU ARE FINALLY GRADU-ATING!
FACE THE NEW PATH BEFORE YOU, WHETHER IT'S POST-SECONDARY EDUCATION OR A NEW JOB, AND...
SUZUKA

SUZUKA 涼風

#164 GRADUATION

*NOTE: IN JAPAN, WHEN A MALE STUDENT GRADUATES FROM HIGH SCHOOL, A FEMALE ADMIRER MAY ASK HIM FOR A BUTTON ON HIS SCHOOL UNIFORM TO KEEP AS A MEMENTO.
ANYWAY, CHECK THIS OUT!
THE FEMALE KOHAI EVEN TOOK THE BUTTONS FROM MY WRISTS!*
I'M TELLING YOU, IT WAS HILARI-OUS!
I LOOKED OVER AND HASHIBA WAS CRY-ING, RUNNY NOSE AND EVERY-THING.
W... WELL, YOU CAN'T BLAME ME!!
WELL, ALL OF MY BUT-TONS WERE TAKEN!
YEAH, I SAW.
THEY WERE ALL TAKEN BY GUYS!
SH... SHUT UP!!
ANYWAY, YOUR BELLY HAS GOTTEN BIG, SUZUKA!
HUH ...?

HMM ...
YEAH... IT'S ALREADY BEEN SIX MONTHS.
UH... YEAH.
DO YOU REALLY GET MORNING SICKNESS AND STUFF?
HEY, WHAT DOES IT FEEL LIKE TO BE PREGNANT?
HUH ?!
IF YOU'RE SO CURIOUS, WHY DON'T YOU GET PREGNANT, TOO?
I CAN HELP YOU OUT WITH THAT!
WHAP!!!
WHAP!!!
YOU CREEPY PERV!!
OUCH! OW! I'M JOKING!!

WHEN I TALKED TO ARIMA-SEMPAI THE OTHER DAY, HE ASKED ME TO GIVE YOU A MESSAGE.
A MES-SAGE ?
HEY, AKITSUKI... I HEARD YOU GOT HIRED BY A COMPANY THAT HAS A TRACK TEAM.
UH... YEAH.
HE SAID THAT IF YOU DON'T COME TO THE OLYMPICS QUALIFYING MEET...
...HE'LL BEAT THE CRAP OUT OF YOU.
O... OLYMPICS?! DON'T BE STUPID! THERE'S NO WAY I'M—
DON'T LOOK AT ME. I'M JUST THE MESSEN-GER.
BUT, YOU KNOW, THESE DAYS, I'M ACTUALLY THE ONE WHO'S—
HEY, WAIT!!

WAIT FOR ME!
TURN
HUH ?!
UH... HONO-KA-CHAN.
OH, I THOUGHT YOU'D ALREADY LEFT SCHOOL FOR WORK.
I GOT WORK OFF 'CAUSE OF THE GRAD-UATION CEREMONY TODAY.
OHHH! SAKURAI-SAN! I SAW YOU ON TV THE OTHER DAY!!
THOSE ACTORS REALLY PLAYED AROUND WITH YOU, HUH!!
GRAB
TH... THANKS. SO YOU SAW.

HUH ...?
OH, YEAH. I HEARD ABOUT YOU AND AKITSUKI-KUN!
UH ...
CONGRAT-ULATIONS ...
...ON GETTING MARRIED!
WE STILL HAVEN'T SUBMITTED OUR REG-ISTRATION, THOUGH.
HUH?
UH... THANKS ...

S... SAKU-RAI...
L... LONG TIME NO...
NEVER MIND THAT. HOW'S YOUR BOYFRIEND, SAKURA!?
HUH ...?
I'VE BEEN SO BUSY THAT I HAVEN'T REALLY HAD A CHANCE TO MEET HIM... BUT WE KEEP IN TOUCH BY PHONE AND EMAIL.
YEAH, THAT'S WHAT YOU SAY, BUT COME NEXT YEAR, I BET YOU'RE GONNA TELL US YOU GOT MARRIED!
THAT'S BEEN THE TREND IN THE ENTER-TAINMENT WORLD NOWADAYS, HASN'T IT?
YOU'RE REALLY LETTING ALL THE DIRTY JOKES FLY TODAY, AREN'T YOU?
...
HM? WHAT'S THE MATTER, KOBAYA-KAWA?
SHUT UP! DON'T TALK TO ME IF YOUR LIFE IS AWE-SOME!
WHOOSH
WHOOSH

BUT, YOU KNOW ...
IT'S A LITTLE SAD.
HUH? WHAT IS?
LIKE, AFTER GRAD-UATION, THERE PROBABLY WON'T BE...
...ANOTHER CHANCE FOR ALL OF US TO MEET.
YEAH ...
WE'LL BE DOING DIFFERENT THINGS, SO WE'LL HAVE CON-FLICTING SCHED-ULES.

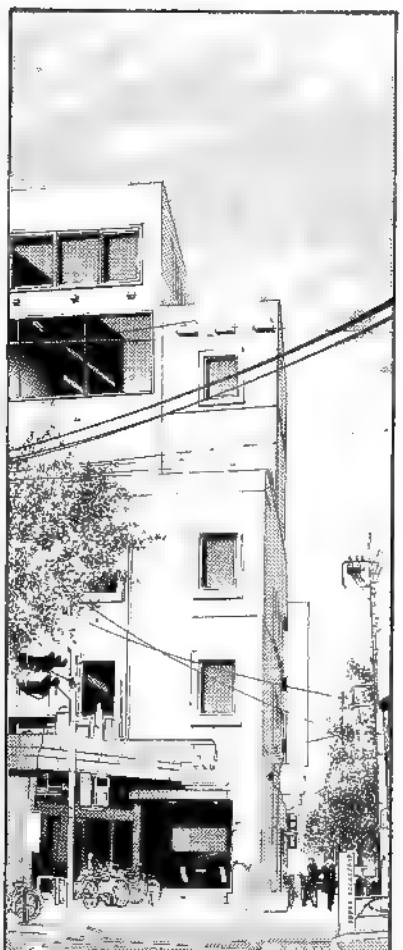
OH, YEAH!
AND HONOKA WAS OUR TEAM MANAGER, TOO!

DON'T LUMP ME IN WITH YOU!
HA HA! WE'RE THE OUT-SIDERS, THEN.

OH, YEAH!
I BROUGHT A CAMERA, SO LET'S ALL TAKE A PHOTO AS A KEEP-SAKE!
EVEN THOUGH THERE ARE OUTSIDERS HERE, IT'LL BE A PICTURE OF THE "FORMER TRACK TEAM"!

ALL RIGHT! I'M GONNA SET THE TIMER!
C'MON, SUZUKA AND AKITSUKI! GET CLOSER TOGETH-ER!
TH... THIS IS CLOSE ENOUGH!
GIGGLE
GIGGLE
AKI-TSUKI-KUN, YOUR FACE IS ALL RED!
I... I'M NEXT TO SAKU-RAI!!

HUH ...?
AFTER THIS?



YEAH. YOU TWO HAVE ANY PLANS?
NOT REAL-LY.
ME NEITHER ...

OKAY, THEN YOU GUYS SHOULD HANG OUT WITH US FOR A BIT.
WE'LL TAKE YOU TO A COOL PLACE.
A COOL PLACE?
OH, YOU SHOULD COME TOO IF YOU'RE FREE, SAKURAI.
SAME GOES FOR YOU, OUTSIDER.
UH.. SURE.
...
HUH ...?!
KARAOKE BIG WAKABA
55
KEY

TOOK YOU TWO LONG ENOUGH!!
WE STARTED WITHOUT YOU.
IT WAS TOUGH KEEPING IT A SECRET, Y'KNOW! SAOTOME-SAN REALLY SEEMED LIKE SHE WANTED TO LET IT OUT!
WELL, I MEAN ...!
YOU GUYS SAID YOU COULDN'T HOLD A WEDDING 'CAUSE YOU DON'T HAVE THE MONEY...
...SO WE THOUGHT WE COULD AT LEAST CELEBRATE AMONG CLOSE FRIENDS AND FAMILY.
YOU GUYS ...
...DID ALL THIS FOR US?
OH! YOU TWO CAME!

...
OH... YUI-CHAN! LONG TIME NO SEE!!
C'MON, SIT DOWN! YOU'RE PREG-NANT, AFTER ALL!
GOSH! I'M FINE!
CONGRAT-ULATIONS !!
YAMATO-KUN! SUZUKA-CHAN!
HUH ...?
305
SHE SAID SHE WANTED TO CELEBRATE WITH US.
I INVITED HER FOR THE HECK OF IT, BUT SHE WAS ABLE TO COME.
UH... SURE.
WHAT ARE YOU DOING, YAMATO-KUN? COME HERE AND SIT WITH US!
...
DON'T WOR-RY.
SHE ISN'T THE KIND OF GIRL WHO HOLDS A GRUDGE FOREVER.
OH ...
YEAHHH!
VERY FUNNY !!
YEAHHH!
YAMATO-KUN, BUY US A ROUND!!
OKAY! NOW WE CAN REALLY DRINK!!

YOU SURE DON'T KNOW HOW TO BE PATIENT, HUH!
SOB
WAHHH! I WANNA GET MARRIED TOO!!
WE'RE THINK-NG AROUND M.D-JULY.
CHATTER
WHEN'S THE EXPECT-ED DAY, SEMPAI?
CHATTER
YUP!
SHALL WE?
NICE! C'MON, AKI-TSUKI! MAKE IT GOOD!!
YEAHHH!
WH...WHAT ARE YOU SAYING, KINUGASA-SEMPAI? ARE YOU DRUNK, TOO?!
YEAHHH!
HUH ?!
CLATTER
OOOKAY! IT'S TIME FOR THE BIG EVENT!
LET'S HAVE THE COUPLE OF THE NIGHT MAKE IT OFFICIAL WITH A KISS!!
...
C'MON, GET ON WITH IT!
DON'T BE LAME!

A... ARE WE ...?
WE'RE ALL SET!
KIIISS! KIIISS!
YES! KISS!! KISS!!
YEAH, NO! THIS ISN'T GONNA WORK–
...
HUH ?!
SHOVE
HAH!

BEEP

HUHHH ?!
AREN'T YOU EMBARRASSED ?
WHOA... THEY REALLY DID IT.
HUH ?!
IT'S QUITE SHOCKING, ACTUALLY SEEING IT FIRSTHAND.
YEAH, BUT YOU ACTUALLY DID IT!
YOU'RE THE ONE WHO EGGED US ON!
N...NO, MIHO-CHAN!!
OH, I WANT ONE, TOO!
I'LL PRINT YOU A COPY, SUZUKA!
N...NO, THAT WAS GREAT!
WASN'T IT, SEMPAI ?!
HA HA HA HA! WHAT WAS?!
HONESTLY, YOU'RE THE WORST ...
HEY !!
YOU GUYS HAVE DONE WAY MORE EMBARRASSING STUFF!
WHY ARE YOU BLUSHING NOW?

...
...
AH, SCREW IT!! I'M JUST GONNA SING THE WHOLE NIGHT AWAY!!
YEAHHH!
ALL RIGHT! SING, YAMATO-KUN! SING!!
YEAHHH!
OH! NICE, YAMATO! SING THE CARP SONG! THAT ONE ALWAYS GETS LAUGHS!!
IT ISN'T SUPPOSED TO GET LAUGHS!!

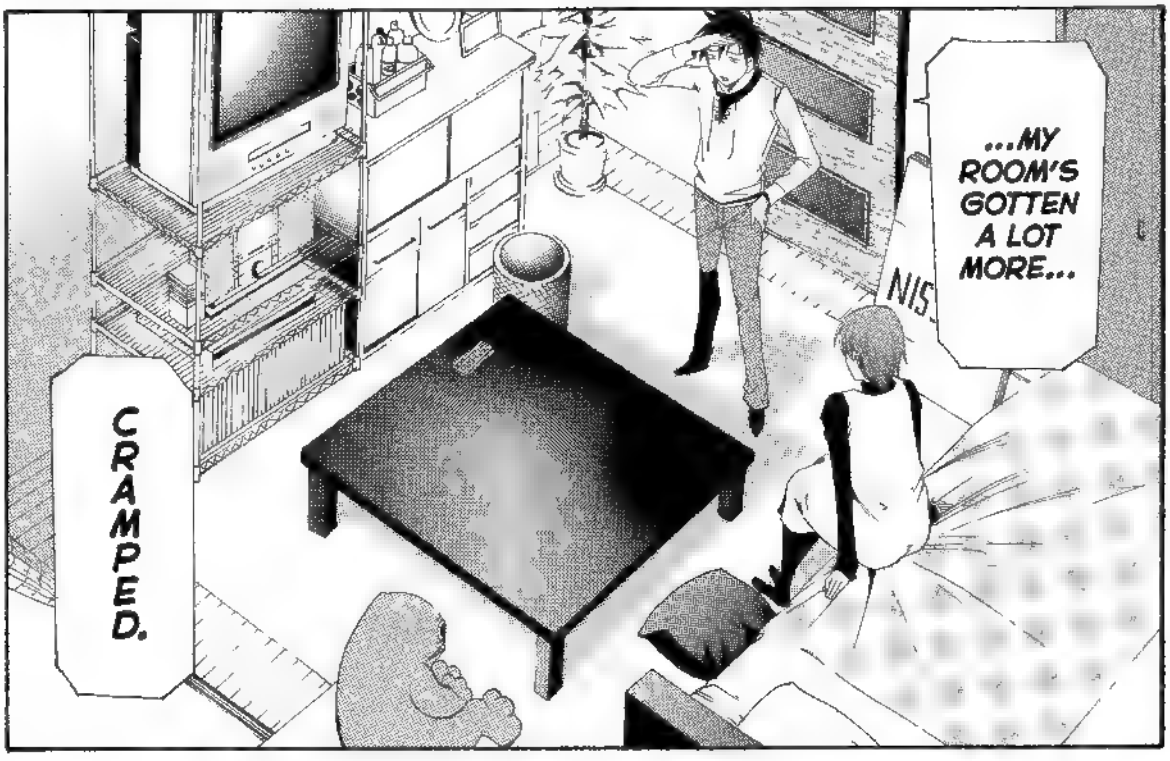
HOW MANY TIMES DO I HAVE TO TELL YOU?
ASAHIYU BATHS
I TOLD YOU THAT THAT DOESN'T GO THERE!
YOU KNOW...
PANT
PANT
HEY, OPEN THAT ONE, TOO! THERE'S STILL A LOT LEFT, Y'KNOW?
NO.
CONTENTS: FRAGILE
OKAY, OKAY ...
I CAN'T. I'M PREG-NANT.
IT'D BE DANGER-OUS.
MAYBE YOU SHOULD HELP ME!
THIS IS ALL YOUR STUFF, ASAHINA!

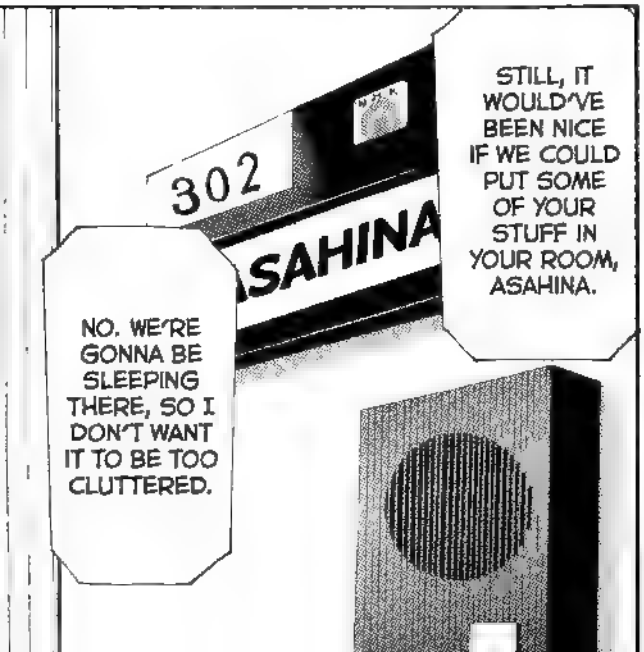
SUZUKA

SUZUKA 涼風

第1話 THE PROPOSAL

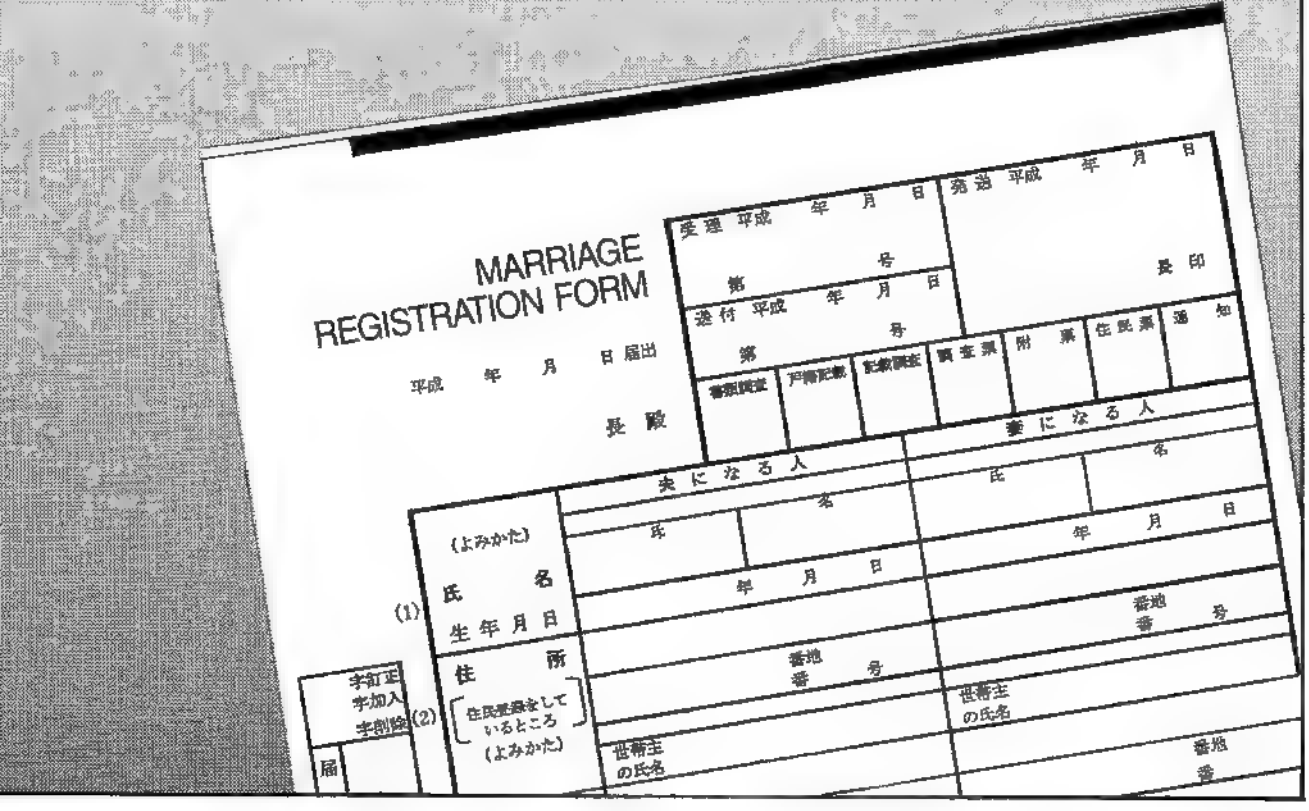
PHEW.
WE'VE TIDIED MOST OF IT, BUT...


...MY ROOM'S GOTTEN A LOT MORE...
CRAMPED.


302
ASAHINA
STILL, IT WOULD'VE BEEN NICE IF WE COULD PUT SOME OF YOUR STUFF IN YOUR ROOM, ASAHINA.
NO. WE'RE GONNA BE SLEEPING THERE, SO I DON'T WANT IT TO BE TOO CLUTTERED.

WELL, THAT'S WHAT HAPPENS ...
...WHEN TWO PEOPLE LIVE TOGETH-ER!

BESIDES, WHEN OUR CHILD LEARNS HOW TO WALK, IT'LL BE DANGEROUS TO HAVE A BUNCH OF STUFF, RIGHT?
SINCE DADDY WILL BE AT WORK, TOO.
DADDY ...?!
WH...WHOA, IT SUDDENLY FEELS LIKE WE'RE NEWLYWEDS.
UM ...
IS A CAMERA CREW GONNA POP OUT AND CONGRATULATE US?
HUH ...?
WE'RE NOT NEWLYWEDS UNTIL WE SUBMIT THIS.


MARRIAGE REGISTRATION FORM
平成 年 月 日届出
長 殿
受理 平成 年 月 日
第 号
送付 平成 年 月 日
第 号
発送 平成 年 月 日
長印
戸籍記載
記載調査
附票
住民票
通知
夫になる人
妻になる人
(よみかた)
氏名
生年月日
住所
(1)
(2)
住民票をしているところ
(よみかた)
世帯主の氏名
字訂正
字加入
字削除
届

OH... YEAH! GOT IT!
WE'LL WORRY ABOUT WHEN TO SUBMIT IT LATER. FOR NOW, LET'S JUST WRITE OUR NAMES.

THE "PARENTS" AND "GUARANTOR" COLUMNS HAVE ALREADY BEEN FILLED OUT, SO...
...ALL THAT'S LEFT IS FOR US TO FILL OUT OUR NAMES.

PAUSE
MARRIAGE REGISTRATION FORM
...?
WHAT IS IT?
...

W... WELL... UNDER "WIFE-TO-BE" ...
...IS IT REALLY OKAY IF I WRITE YOUR NAME, ASAHINA?
SUD-DENLY I'M NER-VOUS ...
HUH ?
WHAT ARE YOU TALKING ABOUT? IF YOU DON'T, WE CAN'T GET MARRIED.
T... TRUE!

UH...
...

BUT ...
THESE PAST FEW MONTHS HAVE BEEN A LITTLE CRAZY, SO I TOTALLY FORGOT...
...I HAVEN'T PRO-POSED TO YOU, HAVE I?
HUH ?

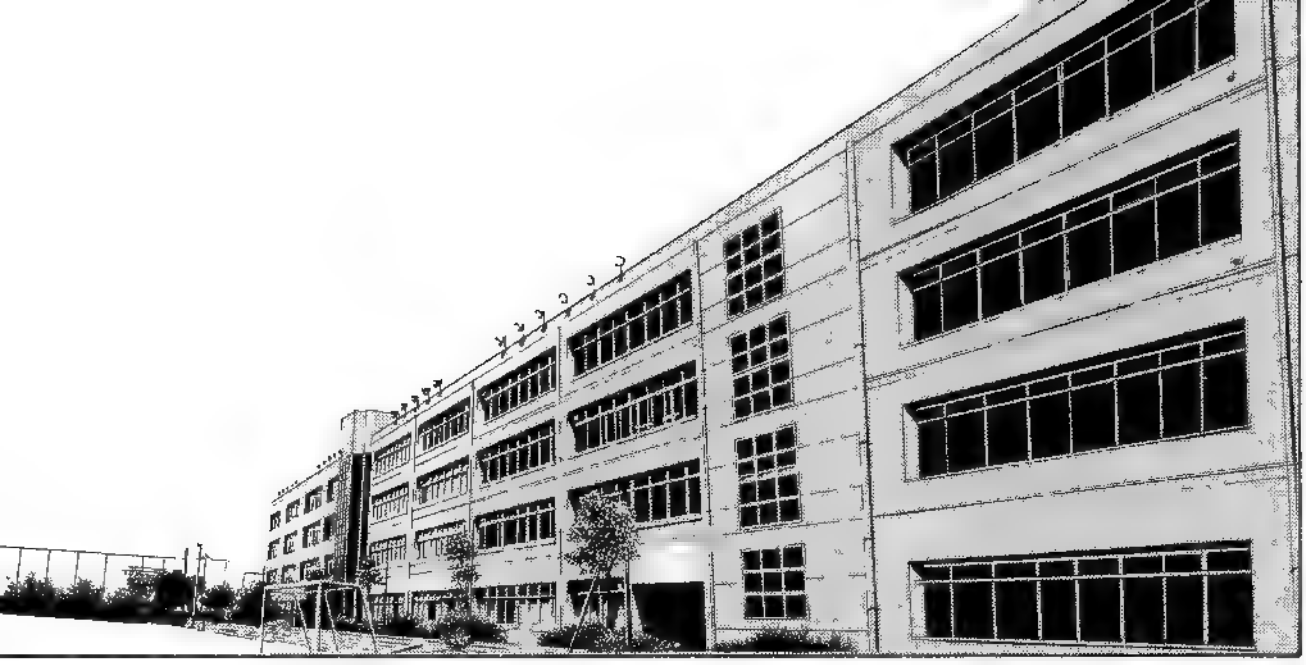
WHAT IS IT NOW?
UH... JUST ...

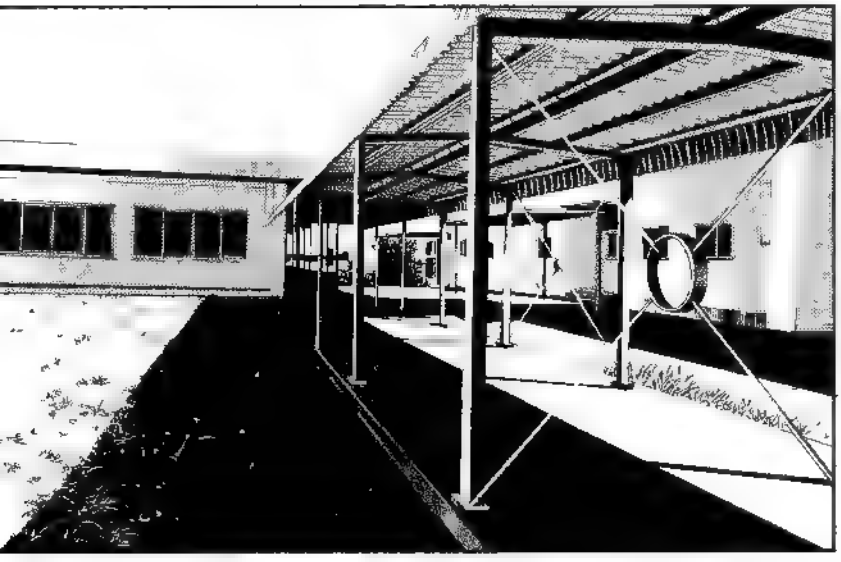
UH ...
WILL YOU... MARRY ME...?
HUH ?!
HUH ?!
YOU HAD PLENTY OF OPPOR-TUNITIES!!
IF YOU WERE GOING TO PRO-POSE, YOU SHOULD'VE DONE IT SOONER!
HUH ...?!
WHY WOULD YOU PROPOSE HERE?! AND IN SUCH A HALF-ASSED WAY, WHEN WE'RE FILLING OUT OUR MARRIAGE FORM!!
ARE YOU STUPID ?!
THAT'S SO NOT ROMAN-TIC!!
AHH! S... SORRY!! I MEAN, I JUST REMEM-BERED!!

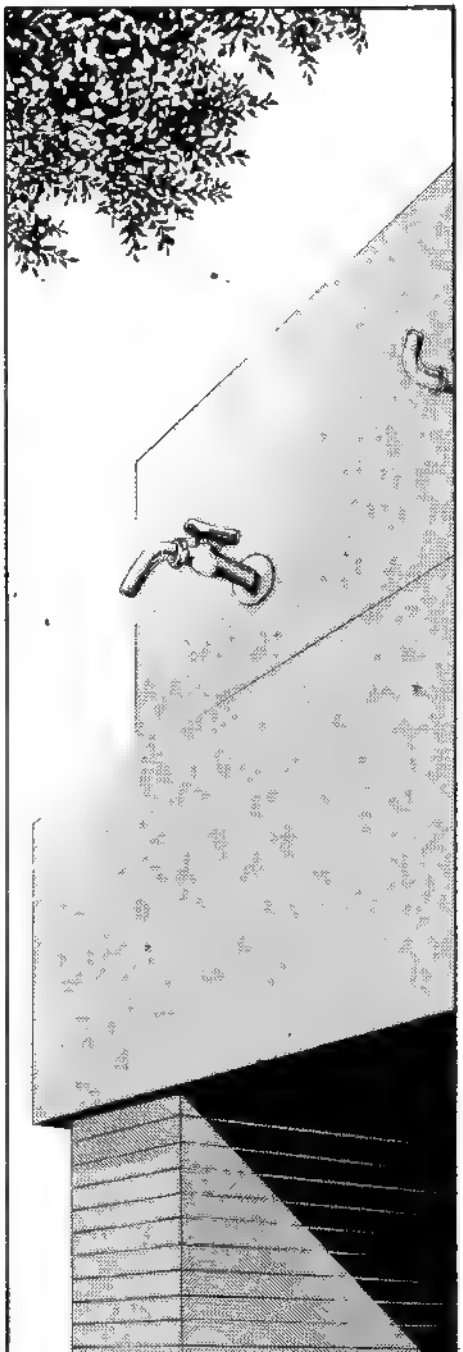
JEEZ ...
HOW DID I END UP IN LOVE WITH A GUY LIKE YOU...?
...
HUH ...?
WH... WHAT DID YOU JUST SAY ...?
WHAT ...?
I MEAN ... UH ...
YOU'VE NEVER ...

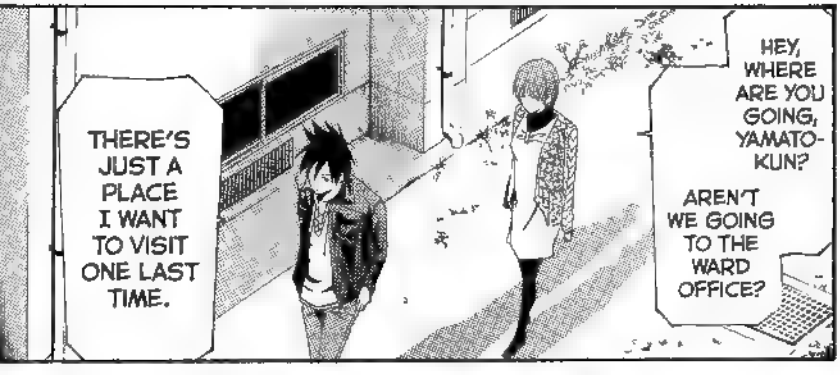
YOU MEAN THE PART ABOUT LOVING YOU?
...?
I...I MEAN, YOU'VE SAID SOME-THING SIMILAR SEVERAL TIMES BEFORE ...
...BUT YOU'VE NEVER ONCE SAID YOU ACTUALLY LOVED ME.
I'M GLAD I FINALLY GOT TO HEAR IT.
THAT'S THE FIRST TIME YOU'VE SAID YOU "LOVE" ME TO MY FACE...
HUH?! REALLY ?!
HUH ?
S... SOR-RY...

THERE!
CLATTER
HUH? T... TODAY ?!
OKAY, LET'S TAKE THIS OPPOR-TUNITY TO GO SUBMIT THE MARRIAGE REGIS-TRATION FORM!!
I MEAN, IT'S THE FIRST DAY YOU'VE EVER SAID YOU LOVE ME...
...AND I EVEN PRO-POSED TO YOU, TOO!!
ARE YOU SERIOUS ?!
YEAH! BESIDES, TODAY'S OUR ONLY CHANCE!!
ASAHIYU BATHS








HEY, WHERE ARE YOU GOING, YAMATO-KUN?
AREN'T WE GOING TO THE WARD OFFICE?
THERE'S JUST A PLACE I WANT TO VISIT ONE LAST TIME.

A PLACE YOU WANT TO VISIT ...?
...?

HERE.

THE GYM ...?

MIGHT NOT KNOW BUT

WHY IS THIS THE PLACE YOU WANT TO VISIT ONE LAST TIME?

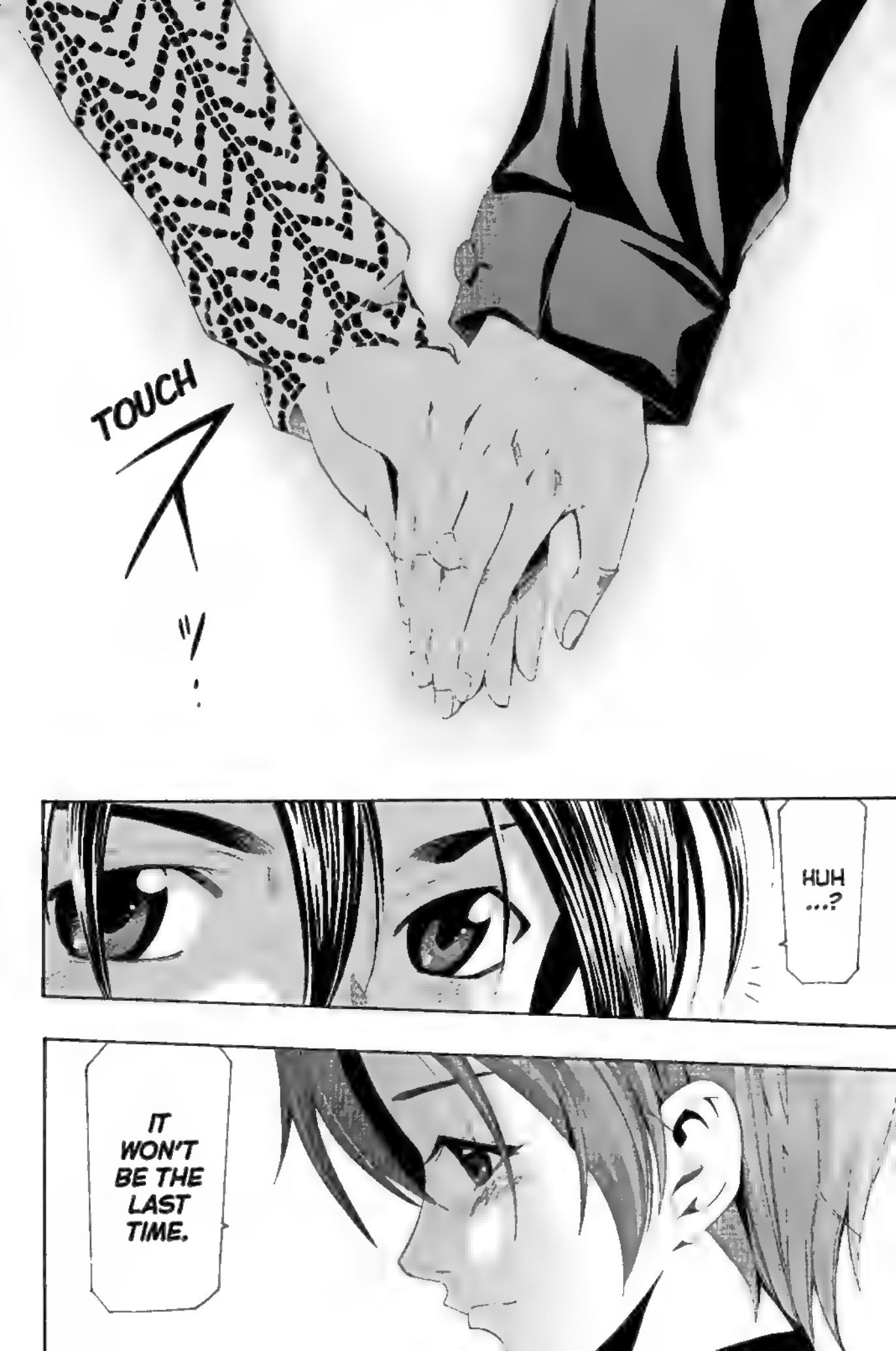
...THREE YEARS AGO, A WEEK BEFORE THE ENTRANCE CEREMONY ...
I WAS HERE WHEN I SAW A GIRL DOING THE HIGH JUMP.
I WAS REALLY IMPRESSED, AND SHE WAS MORE BEAU-TIFUL...
...THAN ANYONE I'D EVER SEEN. I FELL FOR HER AT FIRST SIGHT.
HUH ...?

WE FOUGHT LIKE CRAZY, BUT...
...WE GRADUALLY GREW TO LIKE EACH OTHER...

WHEN I DISCOVERED THAT SHE ACTUALLY LIVED IN THE APARTMENT NEXT TO ME, I THOUGHT TO MYSELF THAT IT WAS MEANT TO BE...

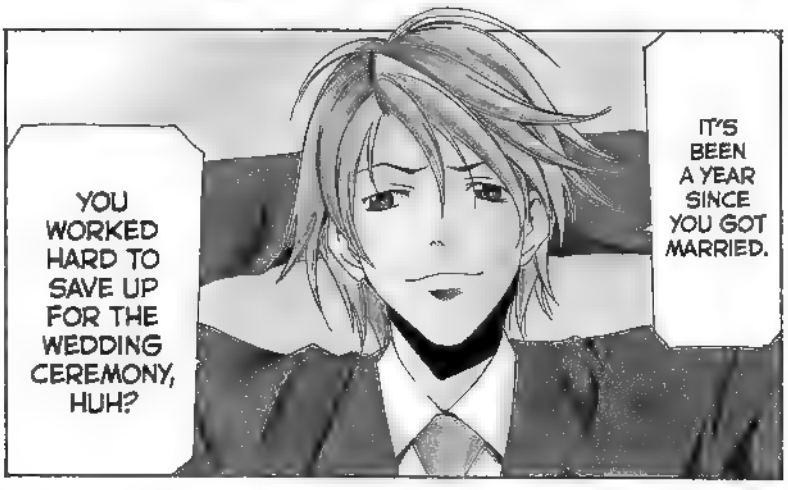
I ASKED YOU OUT AND YOU REJECTED ME ...
BUT I NEVER GAVE UP, AND I KEPT ASKING YOU OUT AND KEPT GETTING REJECTED ...
AND WHEN YOU FINALLY GAVE ME THE CHANCE, YOU HAD TO GO STUDY ABROAD...
...AND SO WE BROKE UP...

YA-MATO-KUN ...
BUT AFTER ALL'S SAID AND DONE ...
...I GET TO MARRY THAT GIRL!
THIS PLACE IS WHERE IT ALL STARTED ...
...SO I WANTED TO VISIT IT ONE LAST TIME.


TOUCH
HUH ...?
IT WON'T BE THE LAST TIME.

THIS IS WHERE IT WILL ALL BEGIN AGAIN.
...
WHOOSH
THIS TIME, WITH THREE OF US!
DO YOU REMEMBER THREE YEARS AGO... WHEN WE WENT SHOPPING ... WE PRAYED AT THE SHRINE?
UH... YEAH.

HUH? WHAT WAS IT THAT YOU PRAYED ABOUT?
YOU KNOW...MY PRAYERS WERE ANSWERED.
DID YOU FORGET?
IT WAS ...
...FOR SOMETHING GOOD TO HAPPEN.


YOU WORKED HARD TO SAVE UP FOR THE WEDDING CEREMONY, HUH?
IT'S BEEN A YEAR SINCE YOU GOT MARRIED.

YAMATO, FIX YOUR TIE! IT'S CROOKED!
I...I KNOW!!

KER-CHAK
YAMATO-KUN, ARE YOU READY?

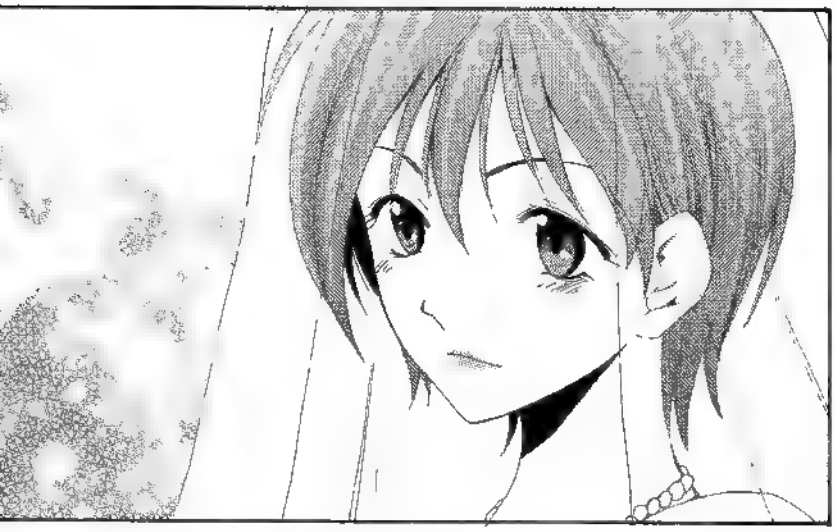
WELL, A RECEP-TION WAS OUT OF THE QUES-TION, BUT...
...I WANTED HER TO AT LEAST HAVE A WEDDING DRESS...

SUZUKA

#166 **SUZUKA**

...

HUH?
WHAT DO YOU THINK, AKITSUKI? YOU'RE FALLING FOR HER ALL OVER AGAIN, AREN'T YOU?

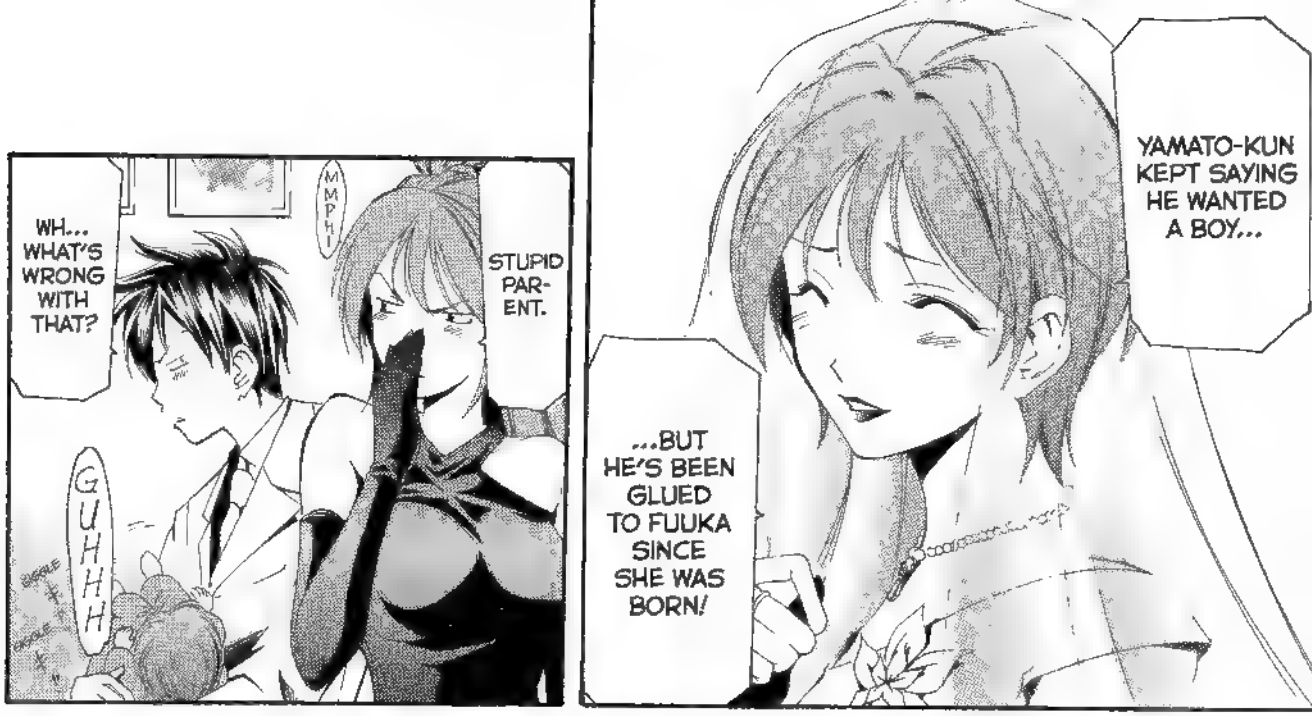


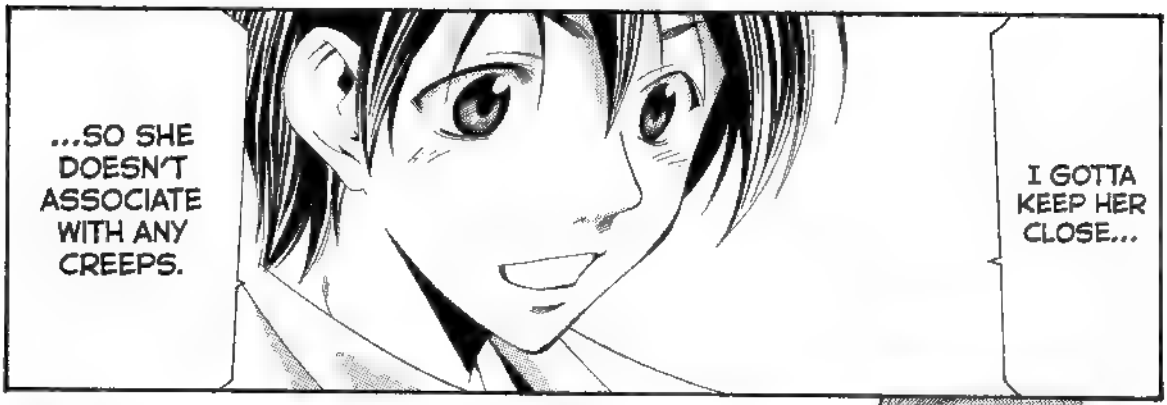
I AM.
YEAH...

CLATTER
WOWWW! YOU'RE SO PRETTY, SUZUKA-CHAN!!
OH MY! YOU REALLY ARE!
TH... THANKS, YOU GUYS.

THANKS!
SH... SHUT UP!
OH! YOU'VE GROWN UP A BIT, YAMATO!
WHAT YOU JUST SAID WAS SO GENUINE!
OH DEAR! WHAT IS IT NOW?
WAHHH! WAHHH!
UH... OKAY.
KER-CHAK
SUZUKA, YAMATO-KUN, IT'S ABOUT TIME.
PLEASE GET READY.

HEY! WHAT?! IS THAT YAMATO'S KID?!
I WANNA SEE! I WANNA SEE!
WAHHH
WAHHH!
OH, I'M SORRY, MRS. ASAHINA.
SHE'S HEAVY, ISN'T SHE?
I GUESS SHE'S JUST SURPRISED BEING AROUND SO MANY STRANGERS.
WAHHH!
WAHHH!
FUUKA-CHAN, THANK GOODNESS YOU DON'T LOOK LIKE YOUR FATHER!
THAT'S FOR SURE!
Y...YOU IDIOT!! SHE HAS MY EYES!!
"FUUKA," WRITTEN WITH THE CHARACTERS FOR "WIND" AND "SUMMER."
AWWW! SO CUTE! WHAT'S HER NAME?!

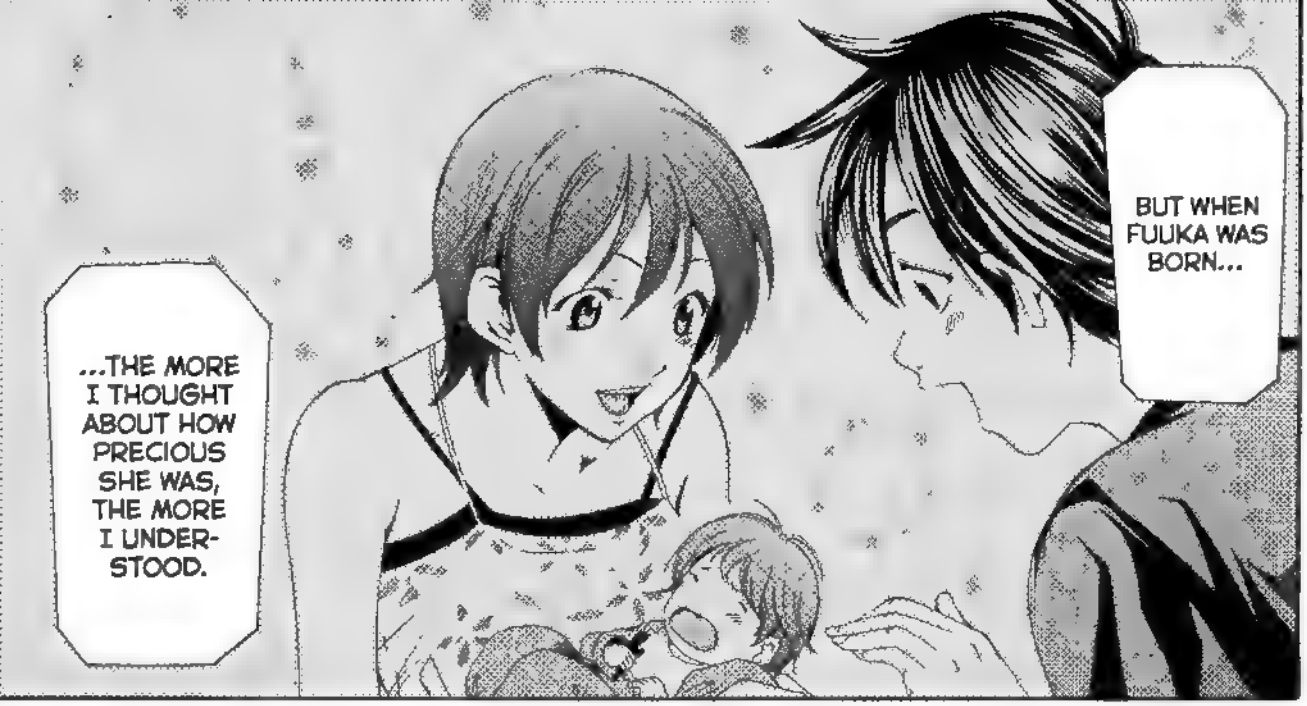

YAMATO-KUN KEPT SAYING HE WANTED A BOY...
...BUT HE'S BEEN GLUED TO FUUKA SINCE SHE WAS BORN!
MMPH!
STUPID PAR-ENT.
WH... WHAT'S WRONG WITH THAT?
GUHHH
GIGGLE
GIGGLE


I GOTTA KEEP HER CLOSE...
...SO SHE DOESN'T ASSOCIATE WITH ANY CREEPS.

SHE REALLY IS CUTE, THOUGH.
IT KINDA MAKES ME WANT TO HAVE KIDS, TOO.
WELL, I'M ALWAYS HERE TO HELP!
STAY AWAY, CREEP!
UNLIKE AKITSUKI, YOU HAVEN'T GROWN UP AT ALL...

GIGGLE
GIGGLE
OH... SORRY.
WHAT'S GOING ON? LET'S HURRY UP.
OKAY.
WE WON'T BE LONG, SO YOU GO ON AHEAD, SUZUKA.
AH, I ALMOST FORGOT.
YAMATO-KUN, I'D LIKE TO HAVE A WORD WITH YOU.
HUH ...?
UH... SURE.

TMP
WHAT DID YOU WANT TO...
...UH ...
UH ... UM ...
GOOD JOB THIS PAST YEAR.
TO BE HONEST, I WAS SURE YOU WERE GOING TO COME CRYING TO ME ALONG THE WAY.
... GOOD JOB.
HUH?
...
LAST YEAR, WHEN YOU SHOWED ME THE PHOTO ALBUM ...
...I THOUGHT I KNEW WHAT IT'D BE LIKE TO BE A FATHER.
I'M SOR-RY ...
HM? FOR WHAT?


BUT WHEN FUUKA WAS BORN...
...THE MORE I THOUGHT ABOUT HOW PRECIOUS SHE WAS, THE MORE I UNDER-STOOD.

IT FINALLY DAWNED ON ME HOW EXCITED YOU WERE...
...FOR YOUR DAUGHTER'S FUTURE... AND HOW HARD IT WAS FOR YOU...
...WHEN ALL THAT CHANGED BECAUSE OF ME.

IT'S TRUE THAT, MORE THAN ANYTHING, I WAS EXCITED FOR HER FUTURE.
HUH ...?

WHICH WAS WHY I WANTED ALL THE MORE TO BEAT THE LIVING DAYLIGHTS ...
...OUT OF THE MERE 18-YEAR-OLD BOY WHO TOOK IT ALL AWAY.
...

...THAT MIGHT BE A PARENT'S EGO...
HOW-EVER ...

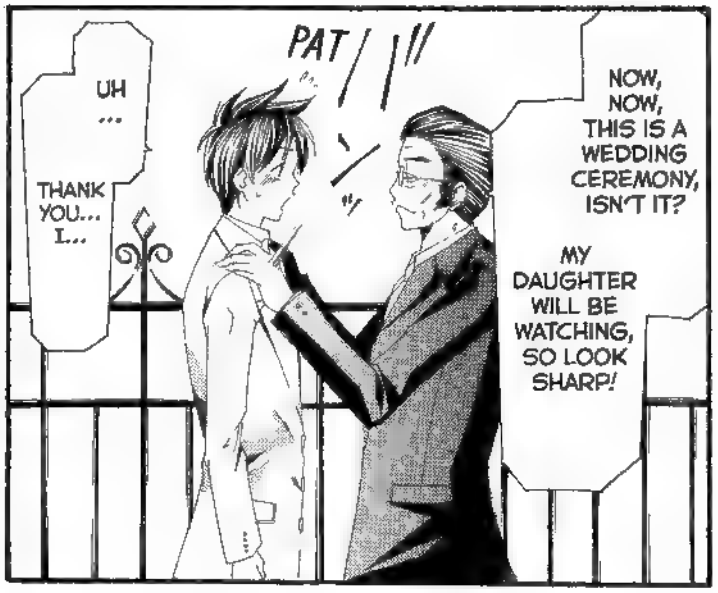
IF SHE UNDER-STOOD WHAT SHE WAS GETTING INTO, THEN IT WASN'T MY PLACE TO INTERFERE.
WHAT-EVER ROAD SHE CHOOS-ES...
ALL I CAN PRAY FOR IS HER HAPPI-NESS.

AND YOU AN-SWERED THAT PRAYER.
I CAN TELL WHEN I LOOK AT HER.
THAT IS WHY ...
...
...I'M ACTUALLY THANKFUL.

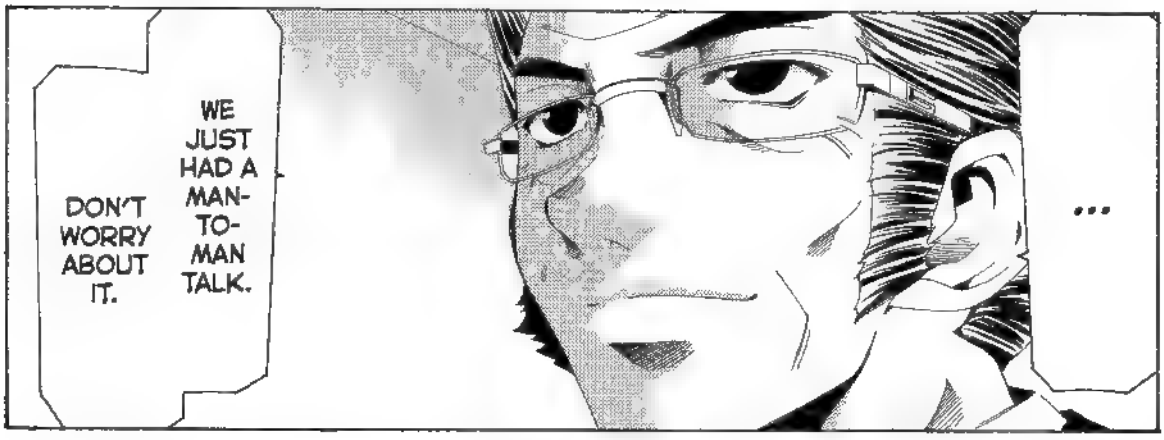
I CAN NOW ...
...ENTRUST SUZUKA TO YOU WITH MY MIND AT PEACE.

THANK YOU...

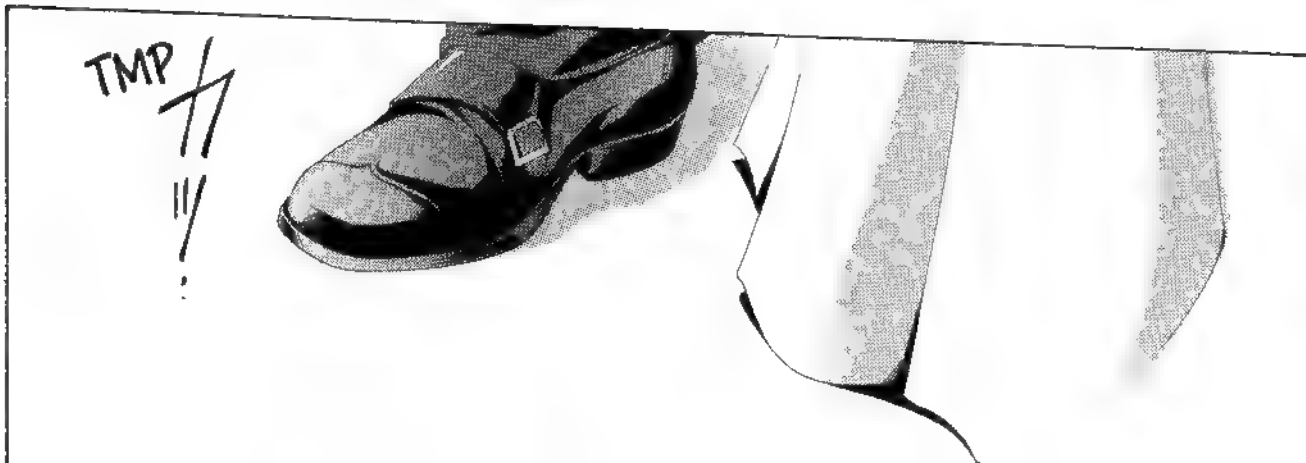
TAKE GOOD CARE OF THOSE TWO, OKAY?
YES, SIR ...
I'LL DO MY BEST!

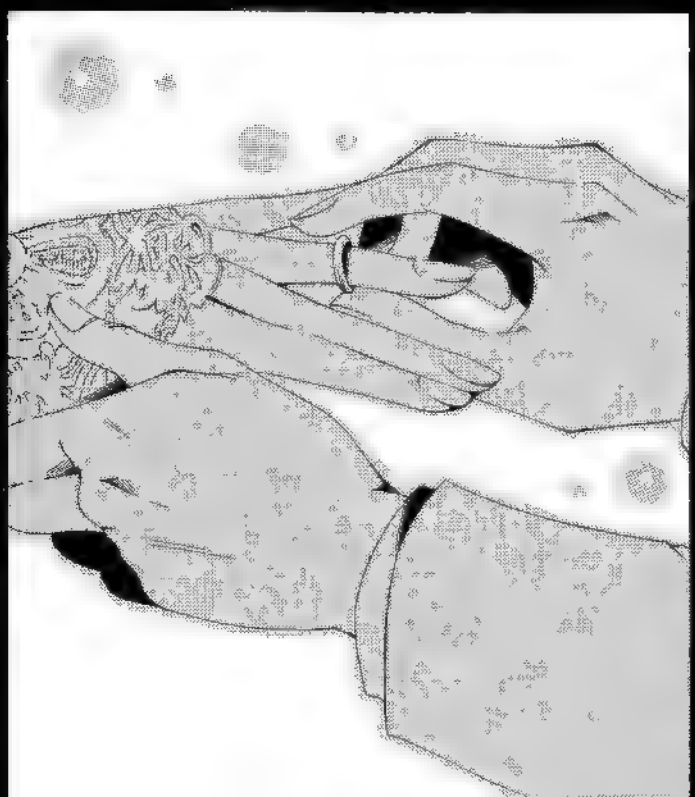

PAT
UH ...
THANK YOU... I...
NOW, NOW, THIS IS A WEDDING CEREMONY, ISN'T IT?
MY DAUGHTER WILL BE WATCHING, SO LOOK SHARP!

HM ?
HEY DAD, WHAT DID YOU END UP TALKING TO YAMATO-KUN ABOUT?
HE SEEMED SUPER NERVOUS WHEN I SAW HIM EARLIER ...


DON'T WORRY ABOUT IT.
WE JUST HAD A MAN-TO-MAN TALK.
...

WHAT ?
HMPH!


TMP



CREAK
OH... THERE THEY ARE!!

CHEER
CATCH

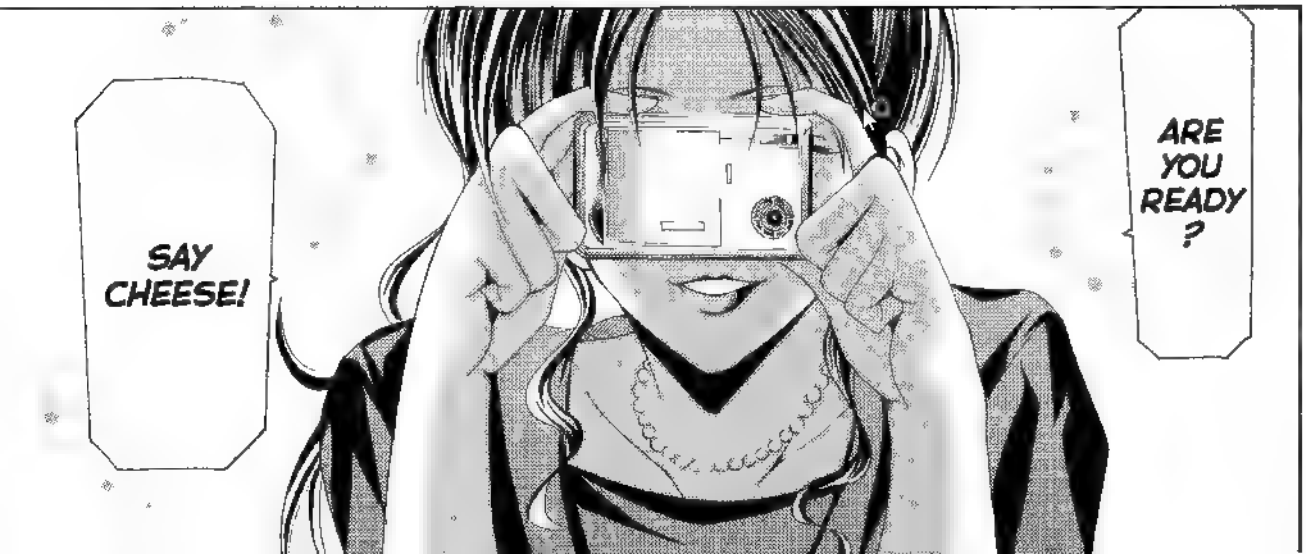
AWW, YOU'RE SO LUCKY, HONOKA-CHAN.
INVITE ME TO THE CERE-MONY, OKAY ?!
HUH ?!
WHAT ?!
OHHH, ME TOO!!
OOOH! SO YOU'RE GETTING MARRIED NEXT, SAKU-RA!
OH...I CAUGHT THE BOU-QUET ...
THANK YOU...
...YA-MATO-KUN.
HM? WHAT FOR?
WHY ARE YOU SAYING THAT?
THAT ALL GOES WITHOUT SAYING!
'CAUSE OF THE WAY I AM, I WAS ALWAYS SELFISH... AND DID STUFF THAT GOT YOU IN TROUBLE...
...AND YET YOU KEPT PURSUING ME...
HONESTLY, IT MADE ME SO HAPPY.
BUT THIS TIME, IT'S MY TURN TO DO THE PURSUING.
HUH ...?

BECAUSE ...
...I CAN'T LIVE WITHOUT YOU, YAMATO-KUN.

HUH? WHA? WHAT'S GOTTEN INTO YOU?!
WHAT DO YOU MEAN? THAT'S HOW I FEEL.
...

S-SORRY!!
OH!
...BUT IT'S TIME TO TAKE PICTURES!
YO! I'M SORRY TO INTERRUPT YOUR LOVE FEST...

OH, YEAH, SURE!
OKAY, AYANO-SAN, COULD YOU TAKE THE PICTURE?
CHATTER
I'M NEXT TO SAKURAI!!
URK...
SEMPAI, YOU'RE TALL, SO YOU GO TO THE BACK.
CHATTER
HEY YOU TWO, COME IN CLOSER.

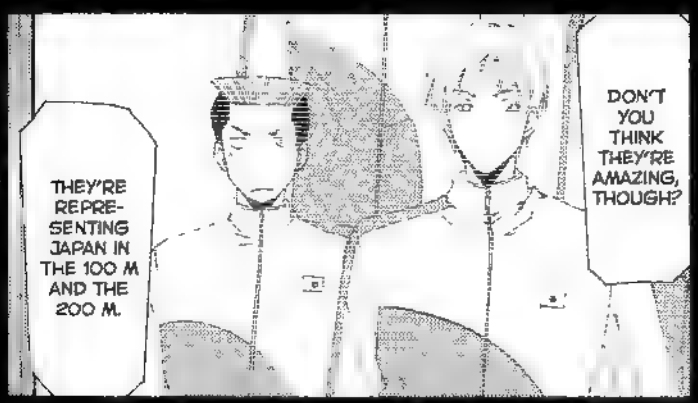

SAY CHEESE!
ARE YOU READY?

SNAP
ヤ

ゴーン
DING
ゴーン
DONG
ゴーン
DANG

ASAHIYU BATHS

302
NHK
SUZUKA AKITSUKI


THEY'RE REPRESENTING JAPAN IN THE 100 M AND THE 200 M.
DON'T YOU THINK THEY'RE AMAZING, THOUGH?

...

HONESTLY, HOW LONG ARE YOU GONNA BE WATCHING TV, YAMATO-KUN?
YOU'RE GONNA BE LATE!
GAH GAH
UH... RIGHT, SORRY.

DON'T LOOK AT THOSE GUYS. JUST FOCUS ON DOING YOUR BEST, YAMATO-KUN.
KINUGASA-SEMPAI'S GONNA GET MAD AT YOU AGAIN, Y'KNOW?
TIGHTEN
I KNOW! HE'S GETTING ON MY CASE ABOUT THE NEXT MEET!
OKAY, I'M OFF TO WORK.
S... SUZUKA ...
...
...?
WHAT'S THE MAT-TER?
WHAT? YOU'RE STILL BLUSHING ABOUT THAT?
DADDY'S SO WEIRD, ISN'T HE?
DAAAH!
SHUSH, YOU!!
WHAT ABOUT MY GOOD-BYE KISS?
HUH?

ONII-CHAN! C'MON, ALREADY !!
PI-PO-N
DING DONG
OH... YOUR AUNT'S HERE, FUUKA.
MIHO-CHAN'S GONNA GET ANGRY IF YOU SAY THAT.
OWWW!!
KICK
N...NOW, FUUKA, YOU'RE HURTING DADDY!
GAH
GAHI
YAAANK
HUHHH?!
SQUEEZE
DADAAAH!
DON'T BE SUCH A BABY!
WH... WHY NOT? AFTER EV-ERYTHING YOU SAID YESTER-DAY!!
OH? I WONDER WHAT THAT COULD BE!
FINE!
SINCE MOMMY'S BEING MEAN, I'LL GET A KISS FROM FUUKA INSTEAD!
IF YOU STAND STILL ...
KER-CHAK
OH, I'LL SEE YOU OFF.
OKAY, I'M OFF!
301
YAMATO AKITSUK

...NOTHING WILL CHANGE.
C'MON! HURRY! IT'S ALREADY 8, Y'KNOW ?!
YIKES! THAT'S NOT GOOD!
BUT IF YOU TAKE ...
HAVE FUN!
BE CAREFUL, YOU TWO!
...A SMALL STEP FORWARD NOW...
WORK HARD, YAMATO-KUN!
YEAH! LEAVE IT TO ME!!
...MAYBE SOMETHING WILL.

Fin.

SUZUKA-MON

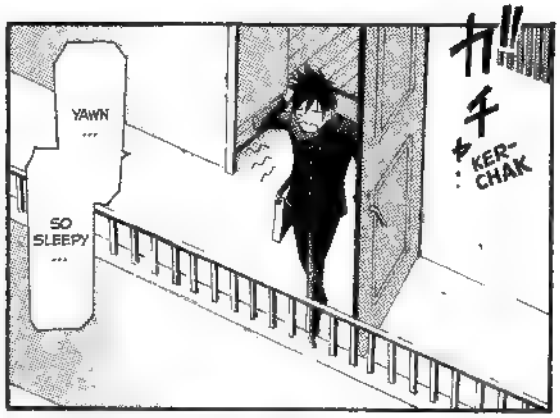
KABU TO MUSHI COMICS

CHAPTER 7:
THE ONE WHERE SUZUKA-MON COMES BACK

KOJI G. SEO

ASAHI-U BATHS

GOOD MORNING, YAMATO-KUN!


YAWN ...
SO SLEEPY ...
ガチ!!
KER-CHAK

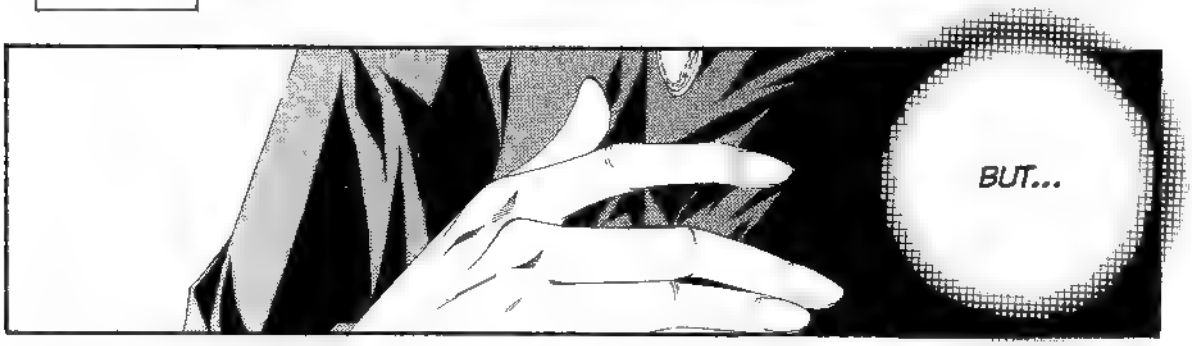
OH, UH ...
YEAH ...

WHAT'S WRONG? YOU SEEM OUT OF IT ...
OH... IT'S NOTH-ING...

TODAY'S WEATHER IS NICE, TOO, ISN'T IT?!

YEAH ...
REALLY?
I HOPE SO...
...
TMP
OKAY, THEN COME ON!
WE'RE GONNA BE LATE FOR MORNING PRACTICE!
BY THE WAY, ASAHINA, DO YOU LIKE RAMEN?
HUH? IT'S ALL RIGHT.
WHY ?
UH ...
I WAS JUST CURIOUS ...
SO THIS ASAHINA DOESN'T CARE FOR RAMEN MUCH.

I REALLY ENJOY BEING WITH HER.
くすっ
GIGGLE
YOU'RE WEIRD.
BUT UNLIKE THAT ASAHINA, THIS ONE'S NICE ...
AND SHE DOESN'T DO ANYTHING RASH, EITHER...


BUT...

I WONDER...
...WHY I HAVE THIS NAGGING FEELING FROM BEFORE OF BEING UNSATISFIED.

THE ECCENTRIC PERSONALITY THAT DEVIATES FROM THE NORMAL...
AGHHH!!
LEAVE MY STUFF ALONE!!
YOU TOUCHED MY MAKE-UP POUCH AGAIN, DIDN'T YOU?!
SCRATCH
THE DOMESTIC VIOLENCE THAT SEEMINGLY REPEATS ITSELF DAILY...
THE MENTAL STATE OF CROSSING A COLLAPSING BRIDGE WHILE BLINDFOLDED...!
BADUMP
BADUMP
THE THRILLING DAYS WHERE YOUR ANSWERS DETERMINE WHEN YOU DIE...
AHHH! I'M SCREWED!
RAWRRR!!
BUT COULD IT BE THAT...
...BEING ON THE BRINK OF DEATH HAS MADE ME REALIZE THE JOY OF BEING ALIVE?!
BADUMP
HUH ?!
I'M SORRY, ASA-HINA!!
NO ... UH ...
WH... WHAT'S WRONG, YAMATO-KUN? YOU'RE SWEATING!
ARE YOU NOT FEELING WELL?!

?!
BOING
POP

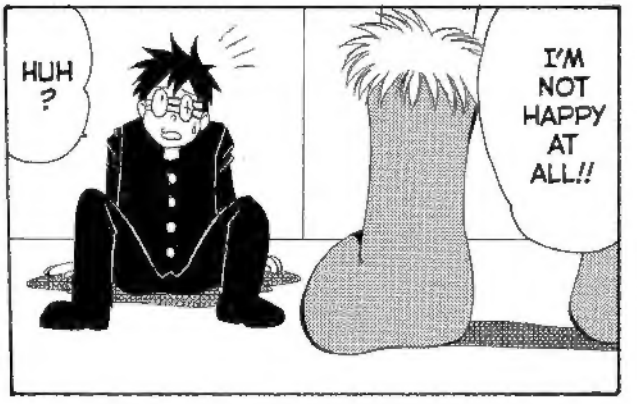
I'M BACK ...
OH...

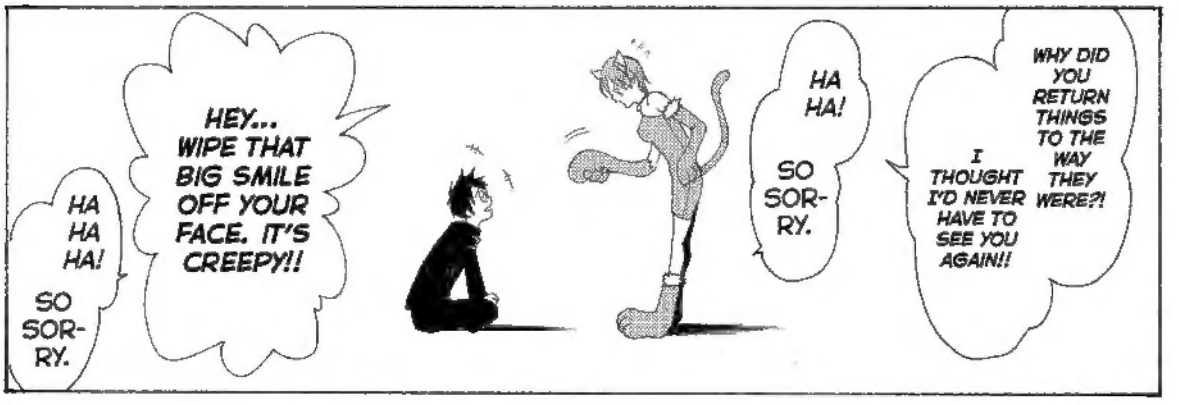
YEAH!
IT REALLY IS BETTER THIS WAY!

...
YA-MATO-KUN...

HUHHH?!
SCRATCH

IT'S NO JOKE THAT I HAVE TO LOOK AFTER YOU AGAIN, YAMATO-KUN!
UGH! WHAT A PAIN!!


HUH ?
I'M NOT HAPPY AT ALL!!


HA HA HA! SO SOR-RY.
HEY... WIPE THAT BIG SMILE OFF YOUR FACE. IT'S CREEPY!!
HA HA! SO SOR-RY.
I THOUGHT I'D NEVER HAVE TO SEE YOU AGAIN!!
WHY DID YOU RETURN THINGS TO THE WAY THEY WERE?!

SCRATCH
SCRATCH
OWWW !!
I HATE IT!!
I'M SERIOUS! IT'S CREEPY!!
★ END OF VOLUME 7 ★

"Suzuka" Afterword

When you like someone, and you get rejected, what do you do if you end up dating them anyway...? No doubt, it's a scenario that can happen to anyone.

The everyday worries and troubles, anxieties and setbacks... These were the themes I tried to illustrate in "Suzuka." At the start of its serialization, I was really worried, thinking, "is it okay for me to totally disregard those romance manga formulas...?" but I received lots of letters saying, "I root for Yamato because I see myself in him," and "The story takes me back to my high school days," which gave me a lot of confidence to see this storyline through.

To my editor, who encouraged me when I was consumed by these worries; to my staff, who worked hard with me; and to all the readers who supported me until the very end, I thank you from the bottom of my heart.

Thank you so much for the past three and a half years, and I hope for your continued support in the future!

Kouji Seo

Suzuka 18

KODANSHA COMICS Digital Edition

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